THE VVIDDOVVES MITE,

Caſt into the Treaſure-houſe of the Prerogatiues, and Prayſes of our B. Lady, the Immaculate, and moſt Glorious Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. With Reaſons why we are to haue great confidence in her Prayers.

WHEREVNTO

Is annexed, A Prayer, for the Loue of God, made in Contemplation of the Paſſion of Chriſt our Sauiour.

Publiſhed by allowance of Superiours.
ANNO M. DC. XIX.

TO MY NOBLE AND MOST DEARE FRIEND S. A.

I Should haue byn moſt gladde to print your name at large, and in capitall Letters, in this front of the Dedication; vvhich might haue paſſed for ſome little

little teſtimony of the much ſeruice, that I ovve, & deſire to pay you . But inſteed of doing you ſeruice, I vvould be ſure not to do you diſpleaſure: and vve are fallen into ſo miſerable tymes, as vvherein I might better cheape intreate you to protect ſome thiefe or outlavv, then to patronize a vvorke that tends to the honour of our B . Lady. It ſhall therefore ſuffice that heerein vve knovv the mind of one another. And although there vvas no remedy, but I muſt needs ſpare to mention your name; yet I could not thinke

thinke of fayling to addreſſe the Treatiſe to your Fauour. Both for the entiere deuotion vvhich you carry to the Glorious Queene of Heauen (and that of the beſt kind, becauſe it leads you to as exact an imitatiõ of her high Purity, as euer I haue diſcouered in any creature of your condition & vocation:) & beſides for that this Patterne vvas moſt due to you, to vvhome the vvhole Peece of that belongs, vvherby I may any vvay acknovvledge the noble Fauour of a moſt vvorthy and vvelldeſeruing Friend. I hope you

vvill excuſe it for his ſake by vvhome it is vvritten; nay I knovv you vvill eſteem it for her ſake of vvhome it is vvritten. And I hope, that both you, and I ſhall one day be ſo happy, vnder the patronage of this immaculate Virgin, the Mother of God, as to diſcouer, and behould that incõprehenſible Glory, vvhich ſhe obtayned by cooperating vvith Gods incomparable Grace.

Your humble Seruant,
& true Friend.

A. G.

Faultes eſcaped in printing.

Page.	Line.	Fault.	Correction.
2.	20.	which	with
6.	14.	*dele*	of degrees
9.	16.	their turnes	the turnes
25.	17.	and not	but rather.
37.	1.	moſt	moiſt
43.	15.	is	were
44.	22.	which	with
46.	2.	beleeue	to beleeue
46.	8.	with	which
62.	4.	were need	were in need
79.	6.	ſpeach	her ſpeach
122.	21.	done	due
124.	15.	is no queſtion	is queſtion
124.	24.	plaine	great
126.	9.	of the	by the
133.	25.	comfortable	comfortably
137.	4.	for now	and now
143.	4.	miſery	miſtery
184.	16.	duety	drily
155.	14.	diſtinct	diſtinctiue
159.	1.	aſſumeth	aſſureth
180.	14.	tottering	torturing
184.	3.	thy taſt	the taſt
192.	1.	This not	T'is not
195.	24.	protection	proiection

THE

Dear Sir. I hope you will pardon this freedom which I have taken in the sending of this Letter to you as it has not been in my power to Communicate any mind to you any other way in the which I must prove my real Affection and tenderness for you. which I hope will be received as well as it is meant. I could wish I could have the pleasant opportunity of viewing my sentiments of Love personally to you which I hope in a short time by some means I shall, but first of all obey you would Confer a favour on me by sending me a few lines from your own

THE WIDDOWES MITE.

CAST INTO THE TREASVRE-HOVSE OF OVR *B. LADYES* PRAYSES.

With reasons why we are to haue great confidence in her Prayers.

CHAP. I.

THERE was neuer foūd within the compaſſe of Morality a more excellent Receipt and Secret, then that of *Friendſhip*, towardes the ſoftning & ſweetning of all the miſeryes of this life. *Friendſhip* it is which doubleth our comforts, A or my

forts, it diuideth our cares, it locketh vp our ſecrets, it reuengeth our wrongs, and it maketh a large and liberall contributi-on of ſuccour towardes the reliefe of all our neceſſityes. I ſpeake not this of the thing which ſome miſcall by the name of *Friendſhip*, and which indeed is no more, then a meere acquaintance, or familiari-ty of conuerſation; though the world be growne to the conceipt of taking ſuch froath as this, for the quinteſſence which I heer commend: But I meane that moſt faythfull and inuiolable *Friendſhip*, which mingleth or confoundeth fortunes, and vniteth minds, and which accompteth it for one of the greateſt hart-ſoares it hath, that it cannot euer reach out the gi-uing hand.

And yet euen this trueſt *Friendſhip* (which being all that I haue ſayd) is ſub-iect both to imperfection & deſtruction; for ſometymes it is changed by ficklenes, ſometymes it is vnſtitcht by abſence, ſometims it is torn in ſunder by vnfaith-fullnes, at leaſt it is ſure to dye when they dye that did profeſſe it; and in fine, it

euer

euer carryeth ſuch a teſtimony, and ſuperſcription in the forhead of it, as ſerueth to point men out to ſomewhat els, aſſuring them that it cannot poſſibly be complete, becauſe all the parties to this contract are no better then ſinnefull and mortall creatures.

One help there is, whereby we may feed vpon this ſweet bitt, without being troubled and tyred with gnawing vpon ſuch bones as theſe, & it is by tranſlating our affection from theſe inferiour obiects to thoſe other of Saints and Angells, in whome there liueth a faculty of correſponding with vs much more nobly, togeather with an impoſſibility of tranſgreſſing the true lawes of *Friendſhip*, which conſiſt in the entire communication of all things, and hath for ſpurs an extreme ardour of affection, & for bridle an impuiſſance to offend in the leaſt degree.

A patterne, or proofe heerof may be taken from thoſe extaticall wiſhes of the Patriarch *Moyſes*, and the Apoſtle S. *Paul*, who did ſo thirſt after the eternall

happynes of their brethren, as that they seemed content to lay aside the consideration and care of their owne. Now if whilest they were yet encumbred with the heauy cloaths of flesh and bloud, they could soare so high into that spher of fire; how much more eminent are they now in this kind, togeather with all those other celestiall spirits, since now they are freed from all impediments, & stand enioying, & feeding face to face, vpon the essence of God, which is the fountayne of *Loue* it selfe, into which by him they are transformed?

We are also taught by holy Scripture, with what zeale the holy Angels do behould, & protect their seuerall charges
Gen.32. heere on earth. The Angell Guardian of *Iacob*, was a Champion that defended & drew him out of all inconueniences. The Angel *Raphael* mentioned in the book of
Tob.11. *Tobias*, was both a Phisitian in restoring his sight, and a sollicitour, or Maister of requests in preferring his suites, to the throne of Almighty God. Our Sauiour
Matt.18. Christ himselfe hath inferred, that if we scanda-

ſcandalize any of his little ones, their ſeuerall Angells (who ſee the face of God) will reſent their wrongs. And (which yet may ſeem more ſtrang) the Angel to whoſe care the *Medes* were cõmitted, did contradict and oppoſe to that other Angell of the *Perſians*, in the quarrells and combats which their people had with one another; to ſhew vs that they do not only watch ouer our ſoules, but euen ouer our fortunes and bodyes alſo, with all which dependeth thereupon, concerning our good. *Dan.* 10.

This care and loue of thoſe happy ſoules and ſpirits, towards the poore inhabitants of this world, proceedeth from the knowledge they haue of the bounty which his diuine Maieſty hath vſed in beſtowing parts of his owne perfection, and in deſigning that vnſpeakable glory which he hath prepared for vs; ſo that in their louing of vs, and cooperating to our ſaluatiõ by their aſſiſtance, they performe an act of reuerence, and homage to our common Creatour. And therfore if the Angells and other Saints deſire and

procure our happines, if they haue compaſſion of our affliction, if they interpoſe for vs the merits of Chriſts death and paſſion in the degree of one, there can be no queſtion amongſt Chriſtians (if indeed they be ſo) but that the Queene of Saints and Angels, the ſacred and perpetuall Virgin, the immaculate and glorious Mother of God, doth performe to vs all theſe things (with infinite others which through our baſenes and blindnes we cannot thinke of:) I ſay not in the degree of one, but in the degree of ſo many millions of degrees as ſhe exceedeth all the Angells and Saints of Heauen in the perfection and height of the knowledge and loue of God.

One particuler reaſon of her vnſpeakable tendernes towards vs all (to omit many others) may be the conſideration of Chriſt our Lords humanity, with he tooke wholy of her, & which he ſpent wholy vpon vs; beſides that vpon the Croſſe, he reſigned her, as it were, to be the Mother of all mankind, whereof heereafter I ſhall haue occaſion to make

further

further mention. Now, as the vnſpeakable loue of God which he inſpired her hart withall, and wherewith ſo admirably ſhe cooperated, maketh God vnſpeakably to loue and delight in her: ſo it is reaſon, that for her loue to vs, we procure to correſpond in all ſuch deuotion & reuerence to her who is ſo gracious in the ſight of God, and ſo well deſeruing of vs, as may be affoarded to the moſt incomparably ſublime Creature, of a meer creature, that euer was, & the moſt abundant, & deere benefactour of mankind that can be thought of vnder God.

There is not in this world ſo great a Monarch, to whome if we had obligation, and meant to make any retribution we might not impart ſomewhat which might concerne him in a ſubſtantiall and ſolid manner. For a very wealthy man might make him ſomewhat the richer, a valiant man might make his dominions the larger, a wiſe man might make his gouernement the happyer, a skillful man might make his health the firmer, and a confident faythfull man might chance

to make his life the ſafer. But with the Saints of heauen, it is not ſo; for al they, and eſpecially this Queene of Heauen, hath ſuch a fullnes of all that, whereof they are capable, as excludeth the poſſibility of mankind from giuing any thing to them, and much leſſe to her, which may increaſe her happynes in any thing that inwardly concerneth her; but whatſoeuer we can offer, is extrinſecal vnto her, as namely Honour, whereof ſhe is only capable at our hands.

The expreſſion of this Honour may be made by diuers wayes: by prayſing her, by praying vnto her, by imitating in ſome ſmall meaſure of her admirable vertues, & by carrying in our harts a continuall tendernes of deuotiō towards her.

By this tyme, if the Reader be a Caluiniſt, he beginneth to ſhrincke, he deſireth to be excuſed, he reuerenceth (forſooth) the Mother of God as he ought, if you will beleeue him, but he would faine be thought a zealous preſeruer of Gods honour; and holdeth that the termes we vſe in profeſſing our deuotion to her,

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with the cuſtome which we haue in directing to her our prayers is to carry our ſelues idly, if not impiouſly: and he will needs take vpon him to ground himſelfe vpon holy Scripture.

It is ſtrang to ſee how theſe yong Prentices will needs be Merchant-venturers in the art of vnderſtanding that diuin booke; to the deep ſea wherof they lanch out in the ſhallow Cock-boats of their owne conceipts, and thinke they are ſailing into ſome ſafe port, when indeed they are ſplitting vpon rockes. Strāg I ſay it is, to ſee how they are blinded by the deſire they haue to make the Scripturs ſerue their turnes of their paſſion, which ſuffereth them not to diſcern the euidence wherewith it eſtabliſheth often tymes the very point in Controuerſy which they contradict. For how could they otherwiſe make themſelus beleeue, as they vſually obiect, that the Scripture authorizeth any leſſening of our Ladyes honour, that it excludeth her Inuocation, and abridgeth her Prayſe, whileſt indeed it doth abundantly teſtify

her excellency, and giue great warrant for all that the Catholike Church doth practiſe concerning her?

There be holy, & learned men that affirme (& it is full of reaſon) that if the Scripture had ſayd no more of her, but theſe only words, *Maria, de qua natus eſt* Matt. 1. *Ieſus*, Mary of whome Ieſus was borne, it had ſayd ſufficiently of her, or rather that it had ſayd ſo much, as to which no point of dignity could be added. For to affirme, that the Virgin was the Mother of God, is to giue a title which euidently inuolueth ſupreme excellency; & which is ſo great in regard of the alliance, and coniunction it hath with God himſelfe, as that no power of mind created, no man, no Saint, no Angell, nor they all togeather are able entierly, and exactly to comprehend what dignity it is to be the Mother of God. If therfore we are ſo far from being able to conceiue the excellēcy of the glorious Virgin; ſhall we feare to expreſſe it in ſuch poore faſhion, and with ſuch ſhort termes as we are able to vſe? Or can we be in any danger of cō-

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mitting exceſſe heerin, ſo that we ſwarue not (as we neuer do) from making her a meer creature, and from imputing the firſt cauſe of her greatnes to the infinite goodnes of Almighty God?

The Aduerſaryes of her glory might conſider, that the wordes of holy Scripture are not to be valewed after the rates of number, but of weight: and who hath armes wherwith to weeld the ballance, into which that maſſy quality of being the *Mother of God*, is layd? It goeth not, euen in ordinary Audits, by the great number of figures, but if one be placed before a greater number of cyphers, that alone may ſtand for many others: & ſo this halfe line alone, wherof I ſpake, may & doth import a greater eminency, then could haue beene expreſſed in the whole Bible without it; although both theſe Teſtaments, & all thoſe pens of all the Prophets and Apoſtles had ſpent themſelues in the celebration only of her prayſes.

But becauſe all their cunning-men and women, though they ſhould be able to write and read the Scriptures, cannot

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yet caſt accompt, eſpecially after this manner; and that vulgar eyes are neuer ſatisfyed with the riches of a Iewell, vnleſſe it conſiſt of many ſtones; I wil therfore endeauour to let them ſee, that in holy Scripture there is no ſcarcity of that which themſelues deſire, or rather of that which I feare they deſire not, which is, the great aduantages, prerogatiues, and priuiledges of the B. Virgin.

CHAP. II.

IN the firſt place I conceaue that by the way of expreſſe prayſe, as meant for prayſe, there is little ſayd in the new Teſtament of our B. Lady, no more then of our B. Sauiour himſelf. I call that expreſſe prayſe, as meant for prayſe, when a perſon is *ex profeſſo* commended, and extolled for this or that vertue, to this principall end, that he or ſhe may win eſtimation among men: and in this ſenſe I do not find, that either of them are greatly prayſed: only they teſtify ſome little things of themſelues, and that concerning

cerning the selfe same vertue, which is Humility. Our Sauiour sayd, *Learne of me for I am Humble, and Meeke:* and our Lady sayd; *that God had carryed respect to her Humility*. Many other persons are particulerly commẽded in both the Testaments. *Abraham* as the tipe of Fayth; *Moyses* both of zeale and meeknes; *Dauid*, as being a man after Gods owne hart; *Iob* for patience, *Salomon* for wisedom, *Noë*, *Zachary*, *S. Iohn Baptist*, and *S. Ioseph* for being iust: But Christ our Lord, and our B. Lady are not praysed directly for this or that vertue, though the Apostles may secondarily, and vpon occasion be sayd to commẽd the life of Christ, when they exhort the people to whome they wrote, towards an imitation of his vertues.

Gen. 22. *Num.* 12. *Reg.* 1. c. 13. *Iob.* c. 10. *Reg.* 3. c. 10. *Gen.* 6. *Luc.* 1. *Matt.* 11.

We need not go far to seeke a reason that may be subiect to our capacityes why the holy Ghost might thinke good to take this course; for to haue expresly commended them, had beene to imply, after a sort, that words might haue declared how much they ought to be commẽded; and a Reader might thereby haue imagi-

imagined, that their excellency had not ſurpaſſed all humane thought, if it had beene made ſubiect therunto by ſpeach; and therfore they are both ſet out much more to the full, in that their prayſes are couered with the ſacred veyle of ſilence, then they would haue beene, if they had beene expoſed to ſight, by the pen euen of the very Apoſtles themſelues. Whereas now by ſaying nothing in the way of praiſe, but by deliuering ſo much by way of prerogatiue, there is left a liberty, or rather there is impoſed a neceſſity, for men to conceiue as highly, and nobly as they can; and yet to know, when all is done, that the leaſt part of their excellency is not attayned.

Hence it is, that for reuerence the Prophet *Iſay* (when he was to deſcribe God himſelfe in a viſion that he had receaued) repreſented him al couered with the wings of *Cherubims*. And this courſe carryeth ſo great proportion, euen with the very nature & mind of man, as that the famous Poets, and Painters of the world, haue graced their arts with this

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point of Rhetorique, whensoeuer they haue had occasion to describe the eminēcy of an vnspeakable passion; for in such case they thought they could do it best, by not expressing it: and so in the funeralls of such as were deerest to the Suruiuers, they set forth the ordinary mourners by seuerall postures, & countenances of lamentation; but as for a husband of a deere Spouse, or the Father of an only daughter, they haue no refuge, but to hide the faces of those persons, in the decyphering of whose passion they cannot satisfy themselues.

But though there be no particuler, and expresse prayses mentioned as prayses, & not as lights, for imitation giuen in holy Scripture to the seuerall vertues of our B. Lady, any more then (as I sayd before) they are to them of our B. Sauiour; yet as the Apostles, and Euangelists recompt those high and heroicall actions, and the irrefragable testimonyes from heauen, wherupon we may inferre the supreme vertue and sanctity of our B. Sauiour: in the same manner are their

bookes

bookes the Chronicles of many passages in both those kindes, aforesayd, from whence the excellency of the B. Virgin may be deduced, which is infinitly inferiour to that of our B. Sauiour, but incomparably superiour to that of all the other creatures, and is propounded to vs for the marke of our admiration in some things, and of imitation in the rest.

By the Genealogy of our B. Sauiour which is set out by the Apostles, we vnderst and what also that of our B. Ladyes is; for he hath no Ancestours but hers. By them we therefore know, that her extraction and bloud hath as much prerogatiue in it, as a meere creature can receaue; for she is deriued from the Royalty of Kings, from the sanctity of Priests, and from the illumination of Prophets.

The gifts of Nature, and beauty of person which she had, are not so litterally expressed in holy Scripture, otherwise then by the Prophetical speach which is vsed of our Sauiour Christ; *Speciosus for-*
Psal. 44. *ma præ filijs hominum*: He was beautifull beyond all the Sonnes of men, whereby her

her beauty alſo may be knowne, ſince his holy humanity had no viſible naturall beauty at all, but that which it receaued from her. And howſoeuer among perſons who are begotten by the courſe of mankind, we often ſee both that vncomly parents haue handſome children, and the contrary: yet in the preſent caſe there can be no conceipt of that difference, which proceedeth in others from the effects of originall, & many tymes of other ſinnes, wherof without blaſphemy there can be no queſtion made in the Incarnation of our Saüiour Chriſt, which was wrought in the pure wombe of the B. Virgin by the operatiõ of the holy Ghoſt. And concerning the vnſpeakable dignity, and maieſty of her preſence to ſuch as beheld it with pure eyes (and euen they who beheld it with other, were altered by a ſinguler priuiledge of hers, whoſe beauty inſteed of kindling, did quench al vnruly appetite in ſuch as ſaw her) I cannot but digreſſe ſo far, as it is from the Apoſtles to one of their diſciples, to wit, S. *Dennis* the *Areopagite*, of whome it is

Dionyſ. Carthuſ. comment in c. 3. l. S. Diony. Areop. de diuin. nom. art. 16.

related, that hauing the honour and happynes to ſee her, and enioy her preſence, found ſomething in it ſo far exalted aboue the ſtamp of dignity & authority, which is wont to be imprinted vpon creatures, as that he proteſted, if he had not knowne by fayth, that Chriſt was God, he had not beene able to detaine himſelfe from adoring her as God. And it is particulerly to be noted, that he through whoſe mind this paſſed, and vnder whoſe name it is left regiſtred to all poſterity, was no Babe, nor old wife, nor ignorant Miniſter, but one of the prime Doctours of *Athens*, afterwardes a diſciple of *S. Paul*, and ſtill accounted for a moſt ſublimely learned, wiſe, and holy Father in the Catholike Church of Chriſt.

CHAP. III.

THESE external things being ſo little eſteemed by the ſeruants of God, and leaſt of all by her (who was ſo much the more his ſeruant, as ſhe was more fauoured,

uoured, and honoured by him then all the reſt) I may with the more reaſon paſſe ouer with breuity, though I could not perſwade my ſelf to paſſe ouer any thing entierely in ſilence, which concerneth her excellency any way. But the ſpirituall graces which ſhe receaued, and the teſtimonyes of her dignity, which were giuen from heauen, are they which we ought more ſeriouſly to ponder & reflect vpon.

Her life being ſuch as ſeemed ordinary, though interiourly it were not ſo, and her vocation being ſo extraordinary as that ſhe was to be made the Mother of God himſelfe (when once he ſhould be made Man) it was agreable to the wiſedome of the diuine Maieſty, to proclaim and publiſh to the world, the perfection of this creature, by an irrefragable euidence. Therefore as in the Baptiſme of our B. Sauiour, whereby he might ſeeme to haue contracted ſinne, the Holy Ghoſt himſelfe deſcended vpon him, to witnes the infinite ſanctity of his ſoule: In like manner, when before that tyme, there *Luc. 3.*

was queſtion of incarnating and bringing forth a Sauiour of the world in humane fleſh, one of the higheſt Angells in heauen was diſpatched in Embaſſage to witnes the eminency, and fullnes of her holynes; & that the world might know how that her bringing forth a ſon ſhould not carry with it the leaſt impeachment to the ſpotleſnes of her purity.

Luc. 1.

The Arch-angell then did thus ſalute her; *Hayle Mary full of grace, our Lord is with thee.* Our Aduerſaryes, the enemies of our B. Ladyes Honour, will needes tranſlate the Greek word κεχαριτωμένη, according to that ſenſe (of the three ſeueral ones which it hath) whereby they may hope to diſaduantage her moſt; & therfore they will not allow it to ſignify *Gratia plena*, full of grace, but *Gratis dilecta*, freely beloued. It is plainely ſhewed by *Tollet* in his Cõment vpon thoſe words, that S. *Ambroſe*, S. *Auſtine*, S. *Hierome*, S. *Athanaſius*, S. *Epiphanius*, and in effect the whole Church hath vſed, & receaued the tranſlation of *Gratia plena*; though yet if it hadbeen otherwiſe, I ſee not greatly why they

Luc. 1.

Cõment. in cap. 1. Luc.

they ſhould triumph as after a victory: ſince if our B. Lady were as they muſt confeſſe, *Freely beloued*, with ſuch an eminency aboue all other creatures, as to be made the Mother of God; it doth by neceſſary inference of congruity imply all thoſe perfections, in contemplation wherof the Catholik world doth homag vnto her, with attributes incomparably ſuperiour to them of all other creatures. But ſhe was found *full of grace* whether they will or no; and if then ſhe were *full*, through the beauty of her ſoule (which being firſt adorned by Almighty God, drew his eyes afterward ſo downe vpon her, as euen to be enamoured with her when he was yet to make her the Mother of the Eternal Word;) let them conceaue that can, how ſhe ouerflowed therewith afterward. And the example of the good *Chananæan* who did as it were oblige our Sauiour to beſtow of thoſe crummes vpon her (being a Gentile) which fell from the table of the children of God, (who were the Iewes) may inuite vs to begge, that ſome drop of thoſe ouer-

flowings which cānot through the goodnes of God but descend from the superabundance of that grace, wherewith the B. Virgin was so much more then filled, may be applyed to our benefit, and to the making of vs gracious in his sight in som measure, which she was beyond all measure.

It cannot but worke in vs an extreme reuerence on the one side, when we heare by the voyce of that Archangell *Gabriel*, that our Lord euen then was with her in a most particuler, and
Luc. 1. plentifull manner, saying *Dominus tecum*, Our Lord is with thee: as if he had sayd, He is indeed with all his creatures, and especially withall his seruants; but yet he is so with thee *per excellentiam*, as if he were with no body els: and on the other side they are miserable, who be not drawne to affect this Sacred Virgin with vnspeakable dearnesse & tendernes, for the infinite benefite which they receaue by her, since they are capable of saluatiō by the mystery of the Incarnation, which (hauing beene decreed in that high Consistory

ſiſtory of the Holy Trinity) did receaue effect and execution in the immaculate wombe of the B. Virgin by her free conſent. And as in the Paſſion of our B. Sauiour (when he came to make a ful point vpon the periode of his life) he did as it were reſigne his Mother to mankind in the perſon of S. *Iohn*, when he ſayd to him, *Fili ecce Mater tua*, Sonne behould thy Mother: ſo in this Incarnation of his ſhe may be ſayd after a ſort, to haue tranſferred the propriety which ſhe had in Almighty God, who was with her (*Dominus tecum*) to the protection, and preſeruation, and ſanctification, & redemption of all mankind; for immediatly afterward, he grew to be called not, *Dominus tecum*, Our Lord is with thee, but *Emanuel*, which is, God with vs.

Ioan. 19.

Luc. 1.

Matt. 1.

The Angell proceedeth (vpon occaſion giuen by the ſacred Virgin) to expreſſe the manner how the myſtery of the Incarnation of the Sonne of God, was to be accompliſhed in her ſacred wombe; & he declareth to her, that ſhe had no cauſe to feare the leaſt ſpot in her purity, that

ſhe had found grace with God, that in
Luc. 1. her wombe ſhe ſhould conceaue & bring forth a Sonne, and ſhould call his name IESVS, that he ſhould be great, and be called the *Sonne of the moſt High*, that our Lord God would giue him the ſeat of his forefather *Dauid*, that he ſhould raigne in the houſe of *Iacob* for euer, that his kingdome ſhould know no end, that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould deſcend from aboue into her, and the Vertue or Power of the moſt High ſhould ouerſhaddow her, and therfore, that he who was to be borne of her ſhould be called the Sonne of God.

Quis ſurdus ſicut populus meus? ſayth
Iſa. 42. the Holy Ghoſt by the Prophet: Who is ſo deafe as my people, that wil not heare? And in this caſe it may be ſayd, who is ſo blind as he that will not ſee, what a cluſter of heauenly grapes may heere be gathered out of Holy Scripture, diſtilling in abundance the wine of Grace & Glory vpon the imaculate Virgin, by deſcribing the nature & quality of that Sonne, of which ſhe was to be the ſo happy Mother? What doubling, and redoubling is

there

there made heere of her felicity, and ſanctity? For notwithſtanding that formerly ſhe was full of grace; we ſee heere ſhe hath found more grace, her Sonne was to be the Sauiour of the world; he was to haue an Eternall Kingdome; the Holy Ghoſt was yet more plentifully to deſcend vpon her; and the vertue or power of the moſt High was to enuirone, and ouerſhaddow her, whereby ſhe might be enabled to encloſe, and as it were againe to ouerſhaddow the Sonne of God.

The conſideration heerof made the ancient & holy Fathers fly vp, as if they had beene in Extaſies, when they entred vpon the prayſes of this Bleſſed Virgin (which afterward I ſhall with better oportunity relate:) and in the meane tyme they who cannot ſee the high titles of Honour that are imparted to the B. Virgin in Holy Scripture, are in a miſerable obſcurity of mind, which they haue deſeruedly fallen into, through the paynes they take to beare no tendernes of deuotion towards her. I thinke I ſay well, in affirming, that they take paynes to this

purpoſe; for otherwiſe it ſeemeth impoſſible that men who profeſſe themſelues Chriſtians, and who take vpon them to vnderſtand ſo well what is recommended in Holy Scripture, ſhould carry ſuch an auerſion, as it is certayne they doe (howſoeuer ſometymes they profeſſe the contrary for very ſhame) from the Mother of that Sonne, by whome they ſay they hope for their ſaluation, notwithſtanding that the Holy Ghoſt hath taken pleaſure, to expreſſe al the circumſtances that belong to her; and that he did not only imploy the Euangeliſts thereabout when Chriſt was to be Incarnate, but the Prophets alſo ſo many hundreds of yeares before, who fortold what kind of creature ſhe was to be. To which purpoſe theſe are the wordes of *S. Bernard*; *The generation of our B. Lady is knowne to haue beene graunted from heauen, for the ſingular priuiledge of ſanctity which ſhe had. Her birth was forepromiſed by the auncient Fathers, it was prefigured by myſticall miracles, it was inſinuated by propheticall Oracles, the Sacerdotall Rod which floriſhed without a roote, the*

Bernar. ſer. in c. 12. Apoc.

Fleece

Fleece of Gedeon *which grew most in the middest of a dry floore, the Orient all gate spoken of in the visiõ of* Ezechiel, *which was neuer open to the accesse of any, did designe, & prediscouer this Virgin.*

CHAP. IIII.

THE next Publication of the admirable priuiledges of our B. Lady was in the *Visitation* which she made of *S. Elizabeth*, at which tyme our B. Sauiour (being then incarnate in her sacred wombe) did also visit S. *Iohn* the *Baptist*, whome S. *Elizabeth* had conceaued in hers, some monethes before. The excellency of our B. Lady appeareth in liuely colours by the happy change which was wrought in S. *Elizabeth* by her presence. For *S. Elizabeth* had no sooner heard her salutation, then (by the testimony of the sacred Text) the infant in her wombe did euen spring which ioy; *S. Elizabeth* herself was repleniſhed with the holy Ghost, she cryed out with a loud voyce, & sayd to the Virgin to this effect; *Blessed art thou* *Luc. 1.*

among

Luc. 1. *among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy wombe: and how come I to receaue this honour that the Mother of my Lord should visite me? for behould* (sayth she) *as soone as euer the voyce of thy salutation did approach mine eares, the Infant in my wombe did spring with ioy; and happy art thou who didst beleeue, for those thinges shallbe performed which were tould thee by our Lord.*

What stupendious priuiledges, & prerogatiues are heere expressed by the Holy Ghost, to haue beene imparted to the glorious and immaculate Virgin? Vpon the first approach of her presence, and the least sound of her voyce, an infant in the wombe of his Mother did
Luc. 1. spring with ioy: which ioy suppoſeth, & taketh for graunted that he was already then indued with the vse of reason: for such creatures as are not reasonable, are not capable of cõceauing ioy. And howsoeuer the working of this miracle may principally be imputed to the presence of our B. Sauiour, as to the cause, yet who seeth not, that he was not pleased to impart such an vnheard-of benefit, but by

by the condition of his ſacred Mothers preſence, to which alſo ſhe did ſo nobly concurre? and in conformity heerof, it is plaine, that *S. Elizabeth* her ſelfe reflected vpon her, as a great meanes therof.

Againe, the Mother was for her part, immediatly vpon the hearing of the Virgins ſalutation, repleniſhed with the Holy Ghoſt, in the ſtrength whereof, ſhe did with a loud and Propheticall voyce, proclaime the bleſſednes of that Mother and Sonne, and confound her ſelfe with the mercy which was vouchſafed her, in that the Mother of our Lord would deſcend ſo low, as to viſit her.

This heape alone of miracles, which did as it were ouerwhelme S. *Elizabeth*, and the acknowledgement ſhe made of her own extrem vnworthines to receaue ſuch graces from the mother of our Lord may iuſtly kindle an vnwonted ardour of deuotion in the hearts of Catholikes towards the Bleſſed Virgin; and as iuſtly humble the proudeſt Caluiniſts hart in the world with ſhame inough, to conſider how ſtraitely at leaſt they conceaue

of

of the glorious Queene of Heauen, who raigneth and ſhineth with immortal maieſty, when they ſee a *S. Elizabeth*, a neere kinſwoman of Chriſt himſelfe, and conſequently deriued from the loynes of ſo many Kinges, a Saint in ſo eminent degree, a Propheteſſe, and the Mother of the greateſt among the children of Men, who was the very Precurſour, and Baptiſt of Chriſt our Lord, ſo looſe her ſelfe as it were with admiration, which ſhe diſcouereth by thoſe interiections of exclamation, to ſee that the Mother of God whileſt yet ſhe was but mortall, and the Sauiour of the world not yet borne of her ſhould diminiſh her ſelfe ſo much, as to vouchſafe her a viſit. But I ſhal afterward reſume this point, by occaſion of the impiety, and fearefull blaſphemy of ſome Caluiniſts, when I compare the baſe mentiõ which they tremble not to make of her, with the moſt honourable memory which the lights, & ornaments of the Catholike Church, the holy Fathers, haue euery where expreſſed. And in the meantyme ſuch as loue the Sonne (as no man doth

doth indeed who will not giue all due honour to the Mother) muſt riſe to more then ordinary veneration and deuotion towardes this perpetuall Virgin, to the end, that the viſits which ſhe vouchſafeth to impart, not once, but often by her motions to vs, & her prayers for vs, may make the ſpirituall fruit of our harts which is our actions, ſpring vp with ioy, vpon the preſence, & approach of Chriſt in the Holy Sacrament; and that we may keep ſuch accompt of the inſpirations, which ſhe procureth for vs, and ſendeth ſo often into the eares of our ſoule, as may make it proue a fit houſe for the holy Ghoſt to inhabite.

Well may we ſay with S. *Auguſtine*; *Anguſta eſt domus animæ meæ, dilata eam; ruinoſa eſt, refice eam*. He confeſſeth to God that the houſe of his ſoule is ſtrait, and he beſeecheth him to enlarge it; he confeſſeth that it is ruinous, and he beggeth of him that he wil repaire it: and by what better meanes can we as it were ingage Almighty God to beſtow thoſe mercyes on vs, through Chriſt our Lord, then

Aug. lib. 1. Confeſſ. cap. 4.

then when we preſent, and put him in mind of this Soueraigne Virgin, who was enabled by his omnipotent hand to make roome in her ſacred wombe, not only for the reception, but euen for the regaling and delighting of him, whome Heauen cannot containe; according to that ſalutation which the Church vſeth to the B. Virgin; *Quem Cæli capere non poterant, tuo gremio contuliſti:* So alſo will ſhe know how to aſſiſt vs in the reparation of theſe our ſpirituall houſes, as well as in the enlarging of them; ſhe I ſay who hath concurred more then all the whole world togeather, vnder God (by the fayth ſhe bare, and conſent ſhe gaue) to the Incarnation of the Word, and conſequently to the reparation, and redemption of the World. This may then be our contemplation, who are Catholiks: and before this diſcourſe be at an end, euen ſome of the Caluiniſts, I hope, will ſee, that they haue not wholy ſuch reaſon to diſſent heerein, as hitherto they haue imagined.

To my vnderſtanding there is no one

one circumſtance that more ſetteth out the vnſpeakable excellency of our B. Lady then that which now I ſhall expreſſe. As ſoone as *S. Elizabeth* had ended that holy ſpeach of hers, our B. Lady being alſo the much more plentifully inſpired with propheſy, did enter into that diuin Hymne of the *Magnificat*, whereof the Church doth euery day ſerue it ſelfe in offering vp her prayſes to God. It is certaine that the humbleſt pure creature, without all exception, that euer was, or will be, was the B. Virgin. In ſo much as that although the perfectiõ of al thoſe vertues (which afterward are to be mentioned) did floriſh and fructifie beyond al humane imagination in her ſacred hart, yet in compariſon of that height, or rather depth of humility, which reigned in her, ſhe may be accounted to haue ſcarce excelled in thoſe other vertues: or rather to ſpeake both more ſafely, and moſt truly, as in the other vertues ſhe without all compariſon excelled all other creatures, ſo in this ſhe excelled her ſelfe.

Such as hunt after prayſe (and

whosoeuer doth not, hath reason to giue God thankes, for he hath beene enriched by him with a great treasure) do know that there is not in the world a greater thirst, then they haue to obtain their end, and that they find no torment more vnsufferable then if they be vnderualued & contemned. And yet this other truth is as certaine, that the person who is ambitious of prayse, doth not more abhorre to be despised, then the soule which is truly humble, doth apprehend and hate to be applauded. And if it indure not to be praysed by others, how well, and how worthily soeuer it may deserue it; how much would men be ashamed to prayse themselues, which not only the perfectiõ of vertue, but euen modesty and ciuility so far disswadeth, as that whosoeuer (being of piety and discretion) doth it, we must suppose both some vnquestionable and knowne truth of the thing it selfe, & some most necessary and iust motiue or mystery which vrgeth him to it.

Heereby it may easily be inferred, what auersion our B. Lady must be confessed

fessed to haue had from making honourable mention of her selfe vpon any occasion; and so it appeares how that at the instant wherein she grew the Mother of God (and by that meanes became so far superiour to all the creaturs both of earth and heauen) she would know her selfe by no other title, but of a bondslaue. Yet neuertheles the Holy Ghost entring at that tyme into her, in a most particuler, and abundant manner, did so possesse all the powers of her soule, and so as it were inebriate, and transport her with the spirit of vnspeakable ioy, as that she fell, in this Canticle (as soone as she had first done her homage to Almighty God, in acknowledging, and adoring him as the Authour of all the Graces that had beene powred vpon her) to declare and auow to the world, how humble and abiect she was in her owne eyes: but that yet withal she was so gracious in the sight of God as she sayd, would not only serue to mak her *Blessed*, but that *all generations should* Luc. 1. 48
professe, and publish her to be such.

Happy were the man, that could

but feele the leaſt part of that which paſſed in her pure ſoule, whē ſhe ſpake thoſe words; in heauen we may hope to haue ſome notice therof, and at the preſent it may ſerue vs for an inuincible demonſtration of her being incōparably prayſeworthy, the paradiſe of whoſe hart being hedged in with ſo much humility, was yet content to celebrate her owne praiſe, or rather which was ouerwrought by the Holy Ghoſt himſelfe, to profeſſe how ſhe was to be honoured, and admired for all eternity; to the confuſion of al ſuch as repine thereat, and to the entire comfort of deuout Catholiks, ſince they, and they alone, are the men who dayly ſtriue to accompliſh the propheſy of her glory.

CHAP. V.

BVT how much ſoeuer we ſhall endeauour heerein, it will neuer come to that height which it deſerueth; eſpecially if we conſider what ſucceeded in the perſon of our B. Lady, to whome the Scripture

Scripture sayth, the Sonne of God and her, was subiect. This testimony was giuen vpon the returne he made with her from disputing in the Temple amongst the Doctors. And as it is euident inough that in all his life till that time (which were twelue years) he had beene subiect, and obedient to her; so it is yet more euident, that in the residue thereof, (which continued for the space of eighteen years till he came to preach & publish himself) he continued to be so. The Scripture sayth, *Et erat subditus illis*, and he was subiect vnto them: That is, both to the B. Virgin, and S. *Ioseph*; and if to *S. Ioseph*, who was but his supposed Father, how much more to the B. Virgin, who was (for as much as concerned his sacred Humanity,) all the parents of flesh and bloud that he had. To S. *Ioseph*, euen for that former reason he liued in so plaine subiection, as that when afterward the Iewes (making reflection vpon his admirable doctrine) sayd, though it were with scorne; *Nonne hic est faber, & filius fabri?* Is not this a Carpenter, and the *Luc. 2.*

ſonne of a Carpenter? Whereby diuers things are inſinuated, both that in the eyes of all that knew him he appeared as *S. Ioſephs* ſonne, who was a Carpenter (& cõſequently that they noted in him ſuch a carriage as became the obedience of a Sonne to his Father:) and ſecondly, it is cleare, that the *VViſedome of God* becomming fleſh for our ſake, did abaſe it ſelfe ſo farre, as to performe the actions, and office of a Carpenter. And from thence it might come, that he tooke the manner of ſpeach which he often vſed afterward for expreſſing his mind, & declaring his doctrine by Parables, and Similitudes (as the ordinary cuſtome of the Iewes did beare) taken from the *Plow*, & *Husband-*
Matt. 13. *men*, and *Tilling*, and *Sowing*, and the like, in which actions the inſtruments that are made by Carpenters be imployed. This laſt I ſay, is moſt probable, & conceaued generally to be true: but in the other point of being ſubiect euen to this ſuppoſed Father of his, there is no place of doubt, without impiety, and hereſy, ſince the Holy Ghoſt himſelf affirmeth it.

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By the way I cannot but heere aske leaue of the Reader, to extoll and magnify the height of dignity, to which this holy Patriarch *S. Ioseph* was aduanced, who as the B. Virgin was choſen from out of all mankind, to be the Mother of our Sauiour Chriſt, ſo was he deſigned from all eternity, as the fitteſt and worthyeſt in the whole world, to be the Guardian both of him, & her. He it was that aſſiſted in the *Natiuity*, *Adoration*, *Circumciſion*, and *Preſentation*; He that ſecured the honour of the ſpotles Virgin from ſuſpition; He that defended both him, and her, by his inceſſant labours, and endles cares (though accompanyed with vnſpeakable comforts) from dangers in that peregrination of *Ægypt*; He that had ſo familiar commerce with Angells, and was as it were the interpreter of Gods ordinances to them both; He of whome it may be litterally, and in the higheſt degree of truth affirmed, that he was indeed, *Fidelis ſeruus & prudens, quem conſtituit Dominus ſuper familiam ſuã.* Mat. 24. A faythfull ſeruant and wiſe, whom God

did place ouer his family. O blessed family! or rather O Empire of Heauen vpon Earth, which consisted of the Sonne of God, who was, and is God, and of the Mother of God, who was and is an imaculate Virgin.

But it is no disparagement to S. *Ioseph*, yea it is honour to him, that the B. Virgin be infinitly preferred before him, both in dignity otherwise, and in the obligation as it were of duty, wherby our Sauiour Christ was more tyed to her, thē to him. So as since our externall actions are qualifyed, and ought to be denominated by our intentions; how much more was our Sauiour Christ to be accounted subiect to our B. Lady, then to *S. Ioseph*, and consequently how much greater was the superiority which she had ouer him, then *S. Ioseph* had?

Let vs consider then, what a sea, or rather what a world of excellency is heereby inferred, to haue been in the person of our B. Lady, of whome the Sonne of God was not only borne for our saluation, but to whome he continued (during

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ring very many years) so truely subiect for her exaltation, and for our instruction. Let vs consider what prudence, and power to gouerne, had beene infused into that soule of hers, which the *Wisedome of God*, the *Word Incarnate* was appointed to obey? And now if you will looke a little vpon the mistake which is taken, that we accompt her for the Queene of Angells, and Saints; consider both how impiously, and how childishly withal she is denyed to be so, they being but seruāts and sonnes adopted; whereas she cannot without blasphemy be denyed to haue beene so many yeares Superiour to the true, only, & begotten Sonne of God, who is the Lord both of Saints and Angells. Let others who haue not the light of fayth play the Hyprocrits in saying they feare to exceed in honour to our Lady, least thereby they should derogate from that which they owe to our B. Sauiour: but let vs haue scruples of offend God, and let vs continue to know that he receaueth a most acceptable honour at our hands by our professing deuotion,

and profound ſubiection to this ſacred Virgin, to whome the Lord of life was not only ſubiect, but the notice of it is left to vs vpon record, that we might learne therby how to carry our ſelues towards his Mother by this example, and that ſo much the more, becauſe afterwards ſhe was to become alſo ours.

And indeed though Chriſt had not beene ſubiect to her, but that only ſhe had receaued the happynes to cohabite with him ſo long, vnder the ſame roofe; euen from thence a great reaſon might be drawn for the proofe of her vnſpeakable ſanctity. Therefore was the Prophet *Dauid* ſo carefull, to keep wicked perſons out of his houſe, becauſe he knew that, *Cum Sancto ſanctus eris, & cum peruerſo peruerteris.* The company of wicked perſons will peruert thee, but the ſociety of Saints will ſanctify thee. What then muſt be our B. Ladyes caſe, through her continuall conuerſation with this Saint of Saints, but that her Vnderſtanding ſhould be ineſtimably illuminated by the preſence of that *Sunne of Iuſtice*, which to her ne-

Reg. 17. 22.

uer

uer ſet, & her Will be inflamed with the neighbourhood which ſhe had to thoſe exceſſiue ardours of that ſphere of Fire, whoſe very countenance hath ſerued to heate frozen hearts, though it found in the B. Virgin no ſuch matter, as that to worke vpon. And (to conclude) that from the ſea of perfection, vpon the top whereof ſhe was ſo long ſayling with a full & proſperous gale of the holy Ghoſt, ſhe muſt needs be adorned and enriched with inualuable treaſures, which by moments is caſt vp into her lappe.

The Scripture is not therefore ſo barren in deſcription of the excellency of our B. Lady, as they who enuy her honour would fayne make themſelues beleeue, but in diuers parts thereof it pointeth out ſundry thinges with their circūſtances, whereby we may, (and muſt if we will not be as bad as beaſts) acknowledge her to be of ſo incomparable an excellency, as whereof the leaſt part cannot be arriued to, by our higheſt thoughts. Nor were the flowers which grew in that delicious garden of her heart without a-

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bundance of fruit, nor were thoſe cauſes, I meane the priuiledges, & great prerogatiues which ſhe had, without the effect of moſt Heroicall vertuous actions, which may partly appeare by the obſeruation of her proceeding in al things, but through the depth and maſſines therof, cannot by any created vnderſtanding be penetrated, and admired as they deſerue.

There is nothing which ſerueth more to humble men, then to imploy themſelues in reading and pondering well the liues of Saints; for thereby we are taught to thinke our ſelues to be thoſe poore creatures that indeed we are. But whoſoeuer ſhall meditate vpon the actions of our B. Lady, will find that in compariſon of her, euen eminent Saints do fal much more ſhort, then we of them. And indeed they deſerue to be thought of in the way of meditation, which a kind of *Conſtructio loci*, as they call it, which may repreſent to our imagination, as well the circumſtances as the ſubſtance thereof. They are innumerable amongſt

our

our writers, who haue at large discoursed heerupon: as for me I am so mindful both of my disability and of breuity, that I will but touch and go, like those dogs vpon the bankes of *Nilus*, one of which might yet more easily drinke that deep Riuer drye, then any man can with the studdy of his whole life, expresse the least perfection of her least Vertue.

For by way of Parenthesis, or rather by way of a short Preface, two ponderations are to be made. First that our B Lady did whatsoeuer she did with perfect liberty of will, though preuented and assisted by the rich grace of God, to the very last point whereof, she did most eminently cooperate as a most eleuated, actiue, and liuely instrument; and was not of no more vse vnto her selfe then a very stocke, or stone could be, according to that *Manichæan*, or *Mahometan* Principle, to which I would to God the Sectaries of our age did not approach so neer. But as she was Blessed who beleeued and consented to the message of the Angell, by the testimony of S. *Elizabeth*; so could

she

ſhe not haue been ſo in *beleeuing* and *conſenting*, if ſhe could not haue choſen but *beleeue* & *conſent*, and with the ſelfe ſame eleuated & entire liberty ſhe performed all the reſt of her incomprehenſible actions. The ſecond point to be pondered, and well imprinted in our minds, is the intenſe perfection, with al her actions receaued from the great degree of hergrace and the ſublime quality of her perſon, ſhe being the Mother of God, who performed them; and the eminency wherwith ſhe did them, being anſwerable to the dignity of a moſt worthy Mother.

CHAP. VI.

FIRST then let it be weighed with how great humility and charity (immediatly after that ſhe was made the Mother of God) ſhe went vp with haſt, towardes the mountaynous part of that Countrey, to viſit and ſalute S. *Elizabeth*, It was no walke of recreation, but a long and laborious iourney of foureſcore and fifteene miles after the Engliſh account,

from

from *Nazareth* to *Hebron*.

It is already shewed by the exclamation of *S. Elizabeth*, how far it is from the power of proud flesh and bloud, to fall into a due consideration of such humility, as this was for the Mother of God, and the bearer of him then in her sacred wombe, to honour thus her ould kinswoman, with a visite that cost her so much paynes. But as *S. Paul* sayd afterward, *Charitas Christi vrget nos*, we are vrged to these thinges by the loue which Christ hath borne vs: so did she find her selfe more deeply wounded with the loue of God, for the Incarnation of his Sonne (the Mystery wherof was then wrought) nor could she find any rest, till she had made others happy by knowing of it, & especially such as would be well disposed for the receauing of such glorious newes. And it may serue vs both for an endles cause of consolation, and for an inuincible reason of encouragement to hope for great blessings at the hands of God by her meanes, since the first action that we find her to haue performed (after her being 2. Cor. 2.

made

made the Mother of God) was to communicate her ſelf to his creatures, before whome, vpon that occaſion, ſo many wonders were inſtantly wrought in that houſe of S. *Elizabeth*.

For my part I can hardly meet with any thing in the life of our B. Lady which I find more admirably ſtrang, then the contempt ſhe ſhewed of reputation, in not diſcharging the ſuſpition of *S. Ioſeph* by ſome little proteſtation of her innocency, when he reflected vpon her being ſo great with child. She could not but know that he muſt needs obſerue in what ſtate ſhe was, and it can hardly be imagined, but that the little countenance which peraduēture he caſt towards her, might giue her aſſurance of how ill he tooke it; wherein he went ſo far, as that the ſcripture ſpeaketh of a deſigne in him to diſmiſſe her ſecretly. Yet do we not find, that ſhe did euer ſo much as open her mouth towards her owne iuſtification. She knew that Tyme would be his Teacher of Truth; ſhe knew that ſhe had already giuen her ſelfe away wholy to

Matt. 1.

God;

God; she knew it was a defect to seeke or care for comfort at the hand of creaturs; and chose rather to be ill vnderstood, and mistakē, then she would discouer a matter which might so far make to her honour and aduantage, as to haue declared her selfe to haue beene made the Mother of Christ, by the ouershaddowing of the Holy Ghost.

When the tyme was come, wherin she was to bring forth the Blessed Infant that she had borne, who is able to comprehend the merit that she (being then the Mother of God, as much as she is now) should vouchsafe to go in the middest of winter as far as *Bethleem* from *Nazareth*, that being the space of fourscore and sixteen miles, to haue her name enrolled, and her head taxed by the Officers of a prophane Emperour; and at that iourneyes end to content her selfe with a Stable for want of better commodity; and with clouts insteed of robes, wherin to lodge, and wherewith to cloath the King of Glory. Which though it do infinitly more weigh in the person of Christ

then of hers, he being God, and ſhe being but a pure creature; yet ſo far is that from diminiſhing her excellency, as that therby is it ſublimed. For without him that patience & pouerty had not been exerciſed by a Mother of God, but only by her as ſhe was otherwiſe, though euen otherwiſe ſhe was the moſt excellent creature in the whole world, the moſt perfectly, and highly vertuous, the moſt beautifull and the moſt nobly borne.

Our Sauiour Chriſt was not only her Sonne, but her Sauiour, her God, her Father, and her Maiſter, and there was neuer any diſciple who followed on ſo neere in imitation as ſhe did of him. And therfore, becauſe afterward he was pleaſed to be circumciſed, wherby he ſtiched a badge of ſinne vpon his ſleeue (not that he was bound therto, but that he might leaue an example of Obedience to vs) ſhe thought it would become her alſo to be purified according to the ordinary cuſtome of women, whereby it was ſuppoſed that ſhe was vncleane, and had reaſon to ſeeke ſuch remedyes as were reſorted

ted vnto by others; whereas indeed she had no more need of *Purification*, then Christ had of *Circumcision*: for as he was without sinne, so had she euer been without the commerce of any other spouse then the Holy Ghost: but the imitation of our Sauiour, & the holy zeale she had to giue high examples of vertue, made her glory in nothing, but that which might serue to make her inglorious.

Her flight to *Ægypt* gaue her not only shame, but paine, which yet she entred into, and accepted with that proofe of vnspeakable humility, which gaue most bright lustre to all her actions. According to the discourse of flesh & bloud she might haue made answere to S. *Ioseph* when he declared the Angells message, that in all liklyhood he was mistaken: That it became not the Sonne of God, & God himselfe to flye from the face of an angry Tyrant: That if any such thing had beene ordayned, it was rather for her to haue receaued the Order then for him: That the warning was to short, the prouisiō too strait, the iourney too long, the

way too dangerous, the countrey too Idolatrous, and Barbarous, themselues without attendance, and without language, and such other cogitations of humane prudence, or pride might easily haue occurred to any creature, her selfe only excepted. But she who had dedicated her selfe already to the seruice of Almighty God, by the name of *Ancilla*, that is a *Bondslaue*, or *Handmayd*, meant nothing lesse then to resume her graunt; but did that which King *Dauid* describeth in the Psalme; *Sicut oculi ancillæ in manibus dominæ suæ &c.* As the eyes of the handmayd are vpon the hands of her Mistresse, so were her eyes vpon the handes of her Lord, and Maister. She expected not that he should reueale any thing to her (as he had done to *S. Ioseph*) by his owne, or by an Angells voyce, but she contented her selfe with *Beckes* or *Signes*, that is, with the least signification of his diuine pleasure. In conformity whereof, this being at midnight, she instantly put her selfe vpon the departure, and consequently vpon the sustayning (for the

Psal. 122.

space

ſpace of tyme, to which there was no limit put) of more incommodityes then we are able to imagine; not feeling or rather not weighing (for that delicate conſtitution could not choſe but feele to the extreme offence of fleſh and bloud) the ardour of that intemperate Climate, through the much more exceſſiue inward heate of loue, to the ſacred humanity of our B. Sauiour, which did both conſume, and yet withall incredibly comfort her deare and tender hart.

They had not beene long returned from thence into *Paleſtine*, but that euery yeare at Eaſter, they began to performe a pilgrimage from their poore Home (which was then in *Galilie*) to *Ieruſalem* being foureſcore and ten miles forward, and as much backeward, that ſo they might aſſiſt at the Ceremonyes & Sacrifices of that holy tyme and place. In this ſhe continued till the very death & Paſſion of our B. Sauiour. Two other feaſts there were beſides that of Eaſter, one called *Hebdomadarum* of the *VVeekes*, or of *Pentecoſt*; the other *Tabernaculorum*, of the

Tabernacles, wherupon men were tyed to go to *Hieruſalem* by obligation, though women were not obliged otherwiſe then by voluntary deuotion. But our B. Lady, whoſe buſines was to fill the world with the odour of a moſt excellent example, did in all likelihood put her ſelfe to the payn of both theſe other iourneys, as well as we are certainly tould by Scripture, that ſhe performed this of Eaſter. And as a man had need be a great Saint, who would enable himſelf fully to conceaue & cõpreheñd the leaſt degree of that ſanctity wherwith our B. Lady (hauing euer the Sonne of God in her eye, and the will of God in her heart) made ſo many millions of moſt holy paſes: ſo he is no Chriſtian, yea and not ſo much as a reaſonable creature, that ſhall not carry a kind of compaſſion, to a perſon euery way ſo conditioned as ſhe was, who meaſured ſo many thouſand miles with her ſacred, but weary feet, although there had beene nothing in it, but the very labour, which yet in her caſe was the leaſt.

How good cheap do our Goſſips ſpeake

speake impiously, by speaking meanely of this sacred Virgin? But their muddy souls are far from considering, that notwithstanding hers was full, not only of innocency, but absolute perfection, yet her body was neuer free from being imployed vpon penall actions of fasting, watching, praying, passing through the heates, and colds of most tedious and laborious iourneys, with that obiect for her eyes to look continually vpon, which ould *Simeon* had set before her; *Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit.* Lue .2. And the sword of sorrow shall euen passe and pierce thy very soule. Our Sauiour Christ had the chalice of his bitter Passiõ alwayes in his sight, and the B. Virgin had the sword of sorrow in hers, which was spiritually indeed, but most truly, and really to strike her through.

CHAP. VII.

THE height and perfection of her owne condition, made her not condescend the lesse towards the feeble, and

frayle ſtate of others, as the manner often is with the men & women of this world to do. A proofe heerof may be taken from her gracious proceeding at the marriage of *Cana* of *Galiley*, where ſhe found her ſelfe, & that for the preſent, without her Sonne. For the Text affirmeth, That he was inuited afterward, togeather with his diſciples; and it is moſt probable that ſhe was the cauſe thereof, as ſhe is now incomparably more the occaſion of the comming of our B. Sauiour, I ſay not, to the marriage of others, but to eſpouſe himſelfe to the ſoules of ſuch as deſire it by her meanes.

It was much for our B. Lady to let her ſelfe fal ſo low, as to be preſent at the celebrating of a marriage: Which howſoeuer it be an honourable, and lawfull ſtate, yet is it far from the purity & perfection of Virginity; as al Virginity of others is incomparably inferiour to that of our B. Lady; and the obiects thereof are ſuch as yield no pleaſure to a ſoule that meaneth inuiolably to be chaſt. It ſeemeth to haue beene made amongſt the

poorer

poorer ſort of people, whoſe conuerſation ſhe chiefly, and only loued, when ſhe ſaw the King of heauen ſo impouerished for our ſakes, that he wanted a cradle after he was borne, a houſe wherin to liue, and a bed wheron to dye.

Her eyes gaue her to vnderſtand, that at the wedding dinner the wine had fayled, & ſhe who had thoſe very bowels of compaſſion about her, wherein Mercy it ſelfe had taken the nature of man, could not choſe but declare their neceſſity to him who was beſt able to relieue it. *Vinum non habent*, They haue no wine. And howſoeuer the late Aduerſaries of our B. Ladyes Honour, taxe her of preſumption in ſo doing, vnder the colour of I know not what Pedanticall, or Grammaticall interpretation of ſome words in the text (which afterward I ſhall haue occaſion to mention) yet the effect which inſtantly followed (namely the working of the miracle, and that as ſhe deſired, & which our Sauiour did rather ſhew that he had no inclination of his owne to worke at that tyme, if his B. Mother had not, as a *Ioan. 2.*

man may ſay, euen induced him a little to breake his paſe) giueth ſufficient aſſurance that her memoriall, which he ſubſcribed ſo eaſily, was gratefull to him, and that it was to be no ill way for vs to obtayne any thing at the hands of Chriſt, if we ſhould make his B. Mother our interceſſour.

If ſhe had found that they had been in want of bread, which is the moſt neceſſary ſuſtenãce of mans life, it ſeemeth that in charity ſhe had euen been obliged to begge, and procure reliefe for them, but ſince ſhe had ſo much compaſſion for their only want of wine, which is a creature that ſerueth rather for recreatiõ then for neceſſary refection; we are taught heereby how deare a Mother ſhe is towards her children; & that her piety extendeth not only to the obtayning of ſuch thinges without which we cannot liue at all, but of ſuch others alſo as without which we cannot liue with comfort. That wine was good, and for ſuch it was prayſed in the Ghoſpell; but *meliora ſunt* Cant. 1. *vbera tua vino*, thy breſts, o Bleſſed Lady, are

are better then the beſt wine, that is, the dearneſſe of affection and fauour wherwith thou doſt obtayne helpes for vs, is no leſſe eſtimable aud honourable often tymes, then are the very helps themſelues.

Out of theſe degrees of Humility, Purity, Patience, and Charity grew that height of Fortitude which ſhe expreſſed at the Paſſion of our B. Sauiour, at which tyme in effect there was nothing els amongſt the creatures to content the eyes of Almighty God. The Synagogue was corrupt, the Apoſtls were fled all but one who was there to receaue (as it were by letter of Atturney, from al mankind) the rich legacy of the B. Virgin for his Mother, and in his perſon for ours, as S. *Ambroſe* doth teach vs. One of his Apoſtles had out of frailty denyed him, another with prodigious malice, auarice, and hypocriſy betrayed him, the reſt forſooke him: but the B. Virgin fayled not there to preſent her ſelfe to receaue the fullfilling of that Propheſy, which ould *Simeon* made at the tyme of her *Purification*, concerning the ſword of ſorrow to pierce & paſſe

Ambroſ. lib. 10. c. 13. in Lucam.

passe through her hart, wherof I haue already spoken. This sword did she receaue into her, not so as to be defeated of her senses by it, as some bould or silly Painters haue represented; but she did it *standing* fast by the Crosse, to shew that still she was full Mistresse of her selfe, & that her sorrow though it were without limits (vpon the sight of such affliction layd vpon that sacred Humanity of her Sonne) was yet ouerwrought by a perfect resignation of all, into the hands of God, and an entiere approbation of al that Passion for the redemption of the world, howsoeuer the Action on the Crucifiers part did highly offend her, though our Sauiour felt not the least offence in his body which did not slice as it were her very soule in sunder.

Ioan. 19.

There was nothing in our B. Lady whichdeserueth not to be esteemed, as *lõgè superioris ordinis*, & therfore when after the Passion, the Resurrection of our Sauiour was by some, in some sort, expected (among whom the mirrour of Pennance the holy enamoured Saint *Mary Magda-*

len

len was one, who with incredible affe-ction rather then fayth (becauſe it was compounded of hope and feare) ran to the ſepulcher to ſee what there had happened) it is not read of the glorious Virgin (the rocke of whoſe fayth was not only not to be battered, but euen not ſo much as touched with the lighteſt waue of infidelity, or doubt) that ſhe ſo much as once ſtirred from thoſe contemplations wherin ſhe was imploying her high thoughts ; but ſhe attended the accompliſhment of that whereof ſhe was already more certaine without ſeeing, then her eyes could make her. Though we doubt not, but that both our B. Sauiour appeared inſtantly to her after the Reſurrection, and that the cauſe why ſhe forbare to record her appearance at the Sepulcher, was not for want of thirſt to enioy the firſt moment of our B. Sauiours preſence, but to ſhew both what her fayth was, and what kind of thing ours ought to be.

The Holy Scripture indeed ſayth, that firſt our Sauiour appeared to S.

Mary

Mary Magdalen, and of the truth thereof no Christian doubteth; but so yet withall we vnderstand those wordes to be meant of ordinary persons, & who were need to haue their fayth confirmed, and euer with exception to our B. Lady, of whome S. *Ambrose*, who wel had weighed the afornamed place of Scripture, doth yet affirme, that she was *testis prima Resurrectionis Dominicæ*, our Blessed Lady was the first witnes of the Resurrection of our Lord.

These are the most expresse Attributs, Excellencies and actions of our B. Lady, whereof the Holy Ghost in the Ghospell maketh mention in few, but infinitely massy words; for there is not one of them which concerneth her, that contayneth not Mysteries beyond mans capacity. And as in humane knowledge it is the fashion for Professours to hide their ignorance when they cannot giue a reason of hard thinges by turning it ouer to certayne sympathies, and secret properties: so in the vnderstanding of Scripture, it is as ordinary on the other side,

with

with mẽ that would be thought to know all, to make a poore Paraphraſe vpon a Text, and to ſay bouldly that no other thing is meant by it, then the little which they haue beene able to expreſſe. Whereas yet in truth there is no doubt, but that the paſſages of holy Scripture, and eſpecially when they ſpeake of our Sauiour Chriſt, and that which concerned him ſo neere as doth his holy Mother, do containe infinite miſteryes. They looke both vpward and downeward, forward and backward, and on all ſides, as I ſhall ſhew afterward; & are not to be comprehended by any one, till we may ſee as we ſhalbe ſeene in the next life. And as for many other prerogatiues and excellencyes of our B. Lady which appeare to ſuch as peruſe the Eccleſiaſticall Hiſtoryes, both concerning her moſt deuout educatiõ cõtinually in the Temple from three years of age, till immediatly before the Annunciation, of her diuine life after the Paſſion in the ſociety of the beloued diſciple of Chriſt, then her Sonne S. *Iohn*, and of her miraculous Aſſumption

into

into heauen, which is recorded (to omit others) by *S. Iohn Damascen*, that great Saint, and great Scholler, & great Chapplaine of our B. Ladyes, to haue beene at that tyme (which is almost nine hundred yeares ago) beleeued and receaued in the Church by a Tradition, which then he sayd was Ancient. These things, I say, with many others I passe ouer, partly, because with Catholikes they would be needles, as being already so notoriously knowne, and by them so piously imbraced, and partly because for the instruction of Caluinists they will not be of much weight, because forsooth they are not registred in Holy Scripture.

I proceed further, and will shew in few wordes how little reason they haue, who laying aside so many and expresse passages of holy Scriptureas I haue mentioned, which do highly honour our B. Lady (both in the Attributes it giueth, & by the actions which it describeth) do catch greedily at three or foure others, which when they haue construed like Schoole-maisters rather then Deuines,

they

they hope the excellency of our B. Lady (which in their harts they cānot endure) may be obſcured thereby: wheras if either grace or reaſon did preuaile, it wold teach them rather to rule doubtfull, and obſcure paſſages by plaine ones; then on the contrary ſide ſuch as are expreſſe, by others that are obſcure; and in true accompt, conclude nothing but by way of inference made without booke.

CHAP. VIII.

I Will therefore in this place by way of concluſion, for as much as concerneth Scripture in relation to our B. Lady, extract a few periodes, which I haue found in effect togeather in that holy man *Caniſius*, writing of this admirable ſubiect, where he ſetteth downe in a cluſter, that which is found in Scripture but in ſeueral paſſages, as ſo many diſtinct grapes of the old Teſtament, being ſo interpreted by the Fathers and Doctours of the Catholike Church; and thoſe others alſo of the new, being expreſſed plainly without

figure as my ſelfe haue heere already reſated them, but in a more ſcattered māner. and now to make a faire full point, I thought good, to ſee if by drawing all theſe ſeuerall beames into one burning glaſſe, I might inflame the Reader to more deuotion. He ſheweth then in his firſt booke of the B. Virgin, and 2. Chapter, how ſhe was the (a) *woman whoſe ſeed was promiſed in Paradiſe*; *She was* (b) *the true Rebecca*; *The true* (c) *Iudith*; *The true* (d) *Eſther*; *The true* (e) *temple and Sanctuary of God propheſied by* Ezechiel, *and the very way of Saints*; *She was aboundantly celebrated in ſpirit by* (f) Salomon; *She was that which* Moyſes *ſaw in the* (g) *buſh and fire*; *That which* Aaron (h) *ſaw in the rod and flower*; *The Orientall gate of* (i) Ezechiel; *The fleece and dew forſhewed to* (k) Gedeon; *The ſtarre which roſe out of* (l) Iacob, *and from whence that beame proceeded which did illuſtrate the whole world*; *She was the myſticall Arke of the* (m) *Teſtament, which conteyned the bread both of men and Angells*; *She was the golden propitiatory*; *The throne of that true* (n) Salomon; *The Princes*

(a) Bern. hom. 2. ſuper miſſuseſt.
(b) Bern. ſerm. de B. Virg.
(c) Hier. ad Saluianum.
(d) Lyra ſupra Eſther.
(e) Rupert. in Cantic.
(f) Bern. hom. 2. ſuper miſſuseſt.
(g) Ibid.
(h) Bern. ſer. ſignū magnum
(i) Ibid.
(k) Bern. hom. 1. ſuper miſſuseſt.
(l) Amb. ſerm. 80.
(m) Ber. de aſſum. B. Virg.
(n) Bern. ibidem.

ces Court; The (o) bed of honour, wherein the Lord, and King of heauen did moſt delightfully repoſe. (o) Bern. ibidem.

Now in the new Teſtament, behold that vnited which before you ſaw ſcattered, and conſider the weight of thoſe wordes of the Ghoſpell ſpoken, either to her, or by her, or of her. *All hayle, O thou full of grace, Our Lord is with thee, Thou haſt found fauour or grace with God, He hath done great thinges to me who is powerfull, All generations ſhall call me Bleſſed, Bleſſed is the wombe which bare thee, Bleſſed are the breſts that gaue thee ſuck. How commeth it to paſſe that the mother of my Lord ſhould viſite me; Bleſſed art thou among women, and bleſſed is the fruite of thy wombe; She alone it is of whome the world doth ioyfully profeſſe, that it is of the holy Ghoſt which is borne in her; She alone vnto whom the Angell did promiſe, that the Holy, which was to be borne of her, ſhould be called the Sonne of God; She alone to whome the Archangell who was ſent from heauen, and S. Elizabeth vpon earth did celebrate with ſuch ſublime prayſes.* Thus ſayth *Caniſius*, and this he ſheweth. *Caniſ. l. 1. de B. Virgin. cap. 2.*

In fine I do much desire, that Catholikes for their comfort, & Caluinists for the conuersion of their soules to deuotion, & tendernes towards this sacred Virgin, may resort to this excellēt work of *Canisius*, where they shall see, besides the euidence of these things whatsoeuer they can expect from any man, concerning the greatnes of our B. Lady, most excellently deliuered, & clearely proued not only by the Scripturs of both Testaments, but by the authority of the Fathers of the Church in al ages, & of these Fathers I will in due place vse a few testimonyes, before I end this discourse, & by those few, the spirit of the rest may be cōceaued. Therfore itis great peruersnes, and a sinne euen against common sense, that since there are so many places of Scripture, which testify our B. Ladyes perfections, those few others which they imagine to be in her preiudice, must yet be rather opposed vnto those former by these men, then any way reconciled, or ranged vnder them.

Yet indeed what can they argue out

of

of those very places? They say, that the words of our Sauiour; *Quid mihi, & tibi mulier*, which he vsed at the marriage of *Cana*, in answere of her suite, concerning their want of wine, do shew that she was worthy of reprehension, and that he rebuked her. They translate those wordes, *Woman what haue I to do with thee?* and they inferre thereby, that our B. Sauiour gaue therein a great checke to his sacred Mother; whereas it is plaine, that they were only spoken for the instruction of them that heard, & of vs that read them; to shew that he was not to manifest himself as God by working of Miracles, till the tyme appointed by his Father, & therfore it is that he sayd also further; *Nondum venit hora mea*, My houre is not yet com, as also to make the world know that we are more to respect the immediate and knowne ordinance of God, then the suite of friends, though neuer so pious and meritorious.

I omit to shew that those wordes do more naturally signify to this effect; *Quid mihi, & tibi?* What haue thou, & I *Ioan. 2.*

to do with their want of wine. As if he had ſayd; *This is not ſuch neceſſity as ought to vrge me towards the working of miracles ſo ſoone*. But whatſoeuer the words crudely taken may ſeeme in ſome conſtruction to ſay; certayne it is, that when our Sauiour had made vs know by them, that which he intended we ſhould learne, he not only diſpoſed himſelf inwardly to ſhew that mercy by meanes of our B. Ladyes prayers (euen as it were before his own tyme appointed) but by the manner he held in ſpeaking the words, and by the gracious countenance which he vſed, he gaue her euidently to vnderſtand that he would graunt her ſuite. For otherwiſe, it would not haue become her diſcretion to haue ſo inſtantly required them that ſerued at the dinner to be punctuall in performing of whatſoeuer her Sonne ſhould require of them. Yea, and by the circumſtances of the Text (which deſcribe the action ſucceeding after a moſt particuler manner, in ſuch ſort, as if they had not beene forwarned, it is morally certaine that they would haue made ſome fault) it is moſt proba-

probable that our B. Sauiour did not only let her know that he would do the thing, but in what manner also he would do it And this at least is cõfessed, that the miracle was wrought, immediatly after our Ladyes suite was presented: which is a reall proofe of her greatnes, and the acceptablenes of her prayers in the sight of God: and this truth deserueth to put to eternall silence whatsoeuer conceipt is framed out of those wordes to her disaduantage.

In like manner do they vrge, how our Sauiour Christ (being sought by our B. Lady, and *S. Ioseph*, and found at last in the Temple, & made acquainted with the much care which they had vsed in seeking him) answered thus; *Quid est quod me quærebatis, an nesciebatis quia in his quæ Patris mei sunt oportet me esse?* Why did you seek me, knew you not that I was to imploy my self in those things which cõcerne the seruice of my Father? But as in the former case, so in this also it is cleare, that when he had taught the world by those wordes, that men were to preferre their Luc. 2.

obligations to God before any tendernes towards their fleſh and bloud, to be ſure that they ſhould haue no colour to perſwade themſelues, vpon this occaſion, that he would diſparage, or diſcontent his holy Mother, the text immediatly adioyns, that he went away with them who ſought & found him, and that he came to *Nazareth*, *Et erat ſubditus illis*, and he there liued vnder them in ſubiection: whereby if men were not wholy blinde, they would both be content to acknowledge this truth, That it is infinitly a greater dignity to haue God for her Son, and her ſubiect, then to be the Superiour and Empreſſe of all things created; and conſider alſo heere, as ſoon as he had performed the office of a Doctour, he made haſt to reſtore the B. Virgin to her poſſeſſion of him againe as his Mother.

Another offer there is made to impeach the excellency of our B. Lady v-
Mar. 3. pon this occaſion. Our B. Sauiour hauing wrought a miracle in the Synagogue, was ſought by the Phariſyes to be deſtroyed, he retyred himſelfe to the ſea ſide,

ſide, and on ſhipbord he preached to the people in huge multitudes, he wrought there innumerable miracles, he retyred himſelfe but was yet ſo preſſed by the people, as that they gaue him not ſo much as tyme to eate. Out of the tendernes of loue, both in regard of his hunger, and of his danger, his B. Mother, and ſome of their kinred were ſollicitous, & they of the people who were next, interrupted his ſpeach with ſaying, thus; *Ecce Mater tua, & fratres tui foris quærunt te.* Mar. 3. Behould thy Mother, and thy Brethren (that is thy kinsfolks) ſtand without & ſeeke thee; and he anſwearing ſayd, *Quæ eſt mater mea, & fratres mei?* Who is my Mother, and my brethren? *and beholding them that ſate about him he ſayd, Behould my Mother, and my brethren; for he that doth the will of God he is my brother, my ſiſter, and my Mother.* This place is much in the diſcourſe of ſome, as if it were indiminution of our B. Ladyes eminency, which yet yieldeth ſo little ground for an obiection, as that, euen for this very reaſon, it is hardly capable of an anſwere. The occa-

ſion of that ſpeach was this. Our B. Sauiour was moſt wickedly and fooliſhly ſlaundred by the Scribes that came down thither from *Hieruſalem*, that he was himſelfe poſſeſſed with *Beelſebub*, and that in the ſtrength of that maiſter-diuell, he did caſt out others of inferiour rancke. Our Sáuiour did not only demonſtrate the falſhood, and the extreme abſurdity of that allegation, but he did withal inſinuate, that euen they knew as much; and that of meere & perfect malice they had layd that imputatiõ vpon him againſt the dictamen of their own conſcience. With all he denounced againſt them the finall danger that they were in, by ſaying *that all other ſinnes ſhould be forgiuen to the ſonnes of men, only that the ſinnes and blaſphemyes againſt the Holy Ghoſt* (wherby the ſinnes of deſperate & confirmed malice which impugneth a knowne truth, are vnderſtood) *ſhould neuer be forgiuen, but puniſhed with eternity of hell fire*. The repreſentatiõ of which verity being made by our B. Sauiour, with ſo great liberty, in the very teeth of them whom it concerned as par-

tyes,

tyes, and who did ſo viperouſly deſire to bite him to death, might reaſonably moue his friendes, to retyre him out of thoſe dangers, wherein they vnderſtood him to be, and to aske for audience. But our Sauiour deſyring not to ſecure himſelfe, but to ſaue thoſe people, ſeemed to lay aſide that petition, and ſtill to attend to their inſtruction. So as this exception taken by the Caluiniſts can proceed frō no other cauſe, then a great ingratitude to God, a great oppoſition to our B. Lady, and a great contrariety to common ſenſe, that the ſpeaches which our Sauiour vſed to make it apparant to the world how infinitely, dearly, and tenderly he would loue both all them and vs, who would performe the will of God his Father, by ſaying that he would reckon of them no worſe then if they were his own fleſh and bloud, ſhould ſerue to no other end with thē, but only to derogate from that ſame fleſh and bloud, yea from his B. Mother her ſelfe, who was the only precious creature from whome he fetched al his ſacred humanity.

Another

Another like this laſt is, the exception which is taken from a like ſpeach of our B. Sauiours, which he vttered vpon a like occaſion. He was inſtructing his diſciples both in what manner, and in what wordes, they were to make their prayers to God; and at the end therof, he was alſo conuincing ſome of the Iewes, by prouing, that he did not caſt out one diuell by another, but by the power of God. The multitude admired, though ſome few calumniated him; and whileſt he was deliuering moſt profitable doctrines, a woman in the company (being as it were rapt into an Extaſy of admiration, to ſee both his diuine preſence, & his ſupernaturall workes, and to heare withall thoſe wordes of Eternall Life, which were deliuered by his heauenly mouth) could not containe her ſelfe from exclayming thus; *Beatus venter qui te por-*
Luc. 11. *tauit, & vbera quæ ſuxiſti:* Bleſſed is the wombe that bare thee, and the breaſts that gaue thee ſucke. Wherupon he ſayd; *Quinimo beati, qui audiunt verbum Dei, & cuſtodiunt illud.* Yea, bleſſed are they who heare

heare the word of God, and keep it. Theſe men (who are ſo wiſely zealous of the Sonnes honour, as that they cannot forbeare to be carping at his Mother vpon all occaſions) would inferre alſo by this paſſage, as if our Lady were no better then one of vs, if we ſhall procure to be the ſeruants of God; drawing (as I ſayd before) a reaſon of honouring her leſſe from that which miniſtreth none at all, but giueth vs only cauſe thereby to conſider the dignity of our owne vocation.

But indeed, it is not our B. Lady, who is immediatly and principally commẽded by the good woman of this Ghoſpell, but it is our B. Sauiour; and ſhe is prayſed there, but vpon the reaſon of hauing brought him into the world, and for being the choyce cabinet of ſuch a precious Iewell as ſhe eſteemed him; and therfore it is ſo much the more abſurdly done, to inferre by the declining which our B. Sauiour made from his own prayſes, that he meant any way to diminiſh the dignity of his Mother. And yet abſtracting this

this consideration for the answere of our Sauiour, it is it selfe so pregnant in the proofe of what I say, as that it needeth not to be much inforced.

For first it may be considered, that he was in a great multitude of people, That he was treating about the state of their soules, That he was in the act of working a miracle, at the end whereof the people were already drawne into admiration, and whilest he might expect to reap the fruit of their conuersion (which was to be ripened by driuing away out of their minds those clouds of ignorance and obscurity, and those stormes of malice and enuy; this passionatly affectionat & deuout woman with more feruour of louing zeale, then exact consideration of all due circumstances, brake off by her exclamation that profitable discourse of our B. Sauiour, to which he with diuine wisedome made the aforesayd answere: Wherby they might vnderstand how true it was, that as his Mother was incomparably happy, so should they also be, according to their measure, if they would

make

make their benefite of thoſe inſtructions, that from tyme to tyme he gaue them; & about which he was in a particuler endeauour at that inſtant, and therfore it it is no meruaile if he did not cheriſh the diſtraction which ſpeach had cauſed in the hearers.

But leaſt of all other places doth this decreaſe the extent of our B. Ladyes felicity, for by it we learne that ſhe was doubly happy. Happy ſhe was, becauſe her wombe had borne the Sauiour of the world, and becauſe her breaſts had giuen him ſucke; for our Sauiour Chriſt did not reuerſe this ſentence of the holy woman pronoũced vpon her, which though it were not then ſo ſeaſonable, was yet in it ſelf moſt highly true. Nor could he who was Truth it ſelfe ſay that to be vntrue, which the holy Ghoſt by the B. Virgins owne ſacred mouth, had formerly pronounced concerning her being Bleſſed, in that diuine Canticle of the *Magnificat*. And happy againe we find that ſhe was, ſince by the teſtimony of our B Sauiour they all are happy, who heare the word

of

the word of God and keep it; for what creature did euer come so close to the keeping of the word of God, as she who had in her sacred wombe kept God himselfe, who was, and is the *VVord*, to which she communicated all the *Humanity* that it had, whose presence afterward she continually enioyed, during the whole tyme of his aboad on earth? whose perfections she imitated, whose Church whilest she suruiued she instructed, and whose kingdome, now that she is assumed into heauen, she hath beautifyed. And al this because Almighty God who made her the Mother of God, made her in all respect to be as worthy of that incomprehensible vocation, as the state of a creature could be capable, and with which also she did concurre after an vnconceuable māner. Now to be a Mother, and a Mother worthy of God himselfe implyeth such moũtaynes of perfection, as euen fill, and exceed the world, and from which the least graine cannot be taken in any discourse of reason vnder the pretence either of holy Scripture, or common sense.

But

But it were well (ſince it is ſo ill) that it were no worſe, but that our Aduerſaryes would only diminiſh the Honour of our Bleſſed Lady by ſeeking to proue, that ſhe was leſſe excellent, and not expreſly to affirme thinges of her, which make her to haue beene an vnworthy and ſinnefull creature. In the ſtrength of which ſpirit of giddines, many ſay, That ſhe was but like to other womē in vertue; others, That ſhe was but as a ſaffron bagge, wherby they inferre that hauing loſt the ſpice, ſhe was no more to be eſteemed; others, That ſhe was but as a *Channell*, or *Conduct of water*, inſinuating thereby, as if Chriſt had ſcarce taken fleſh of her, or els that at the beſt hand he infuſed not any vertue into her. *Luther* is often diſgracing her, and ranking her with the reſt of creatures in generall, & *Caluin* doth as good as deduce that propoſition into particulers, and draw Concluſions out of thoſe principles: now ſaying, *That the Virgin was at leaſt inconſiderate; That ſhe was importune, and did preposterouſly endeauour to breake off the courſe*

Melanc. ad c. 2. Ioan.
Conſtāt. Copron. apud Theo. orat. in S. Nicetā.
Melchior Hoffmānus aſſerens Chriſtum non ſuſcepiſſe carnem ex Maria Virgine apud Bulling. aduerſ. Anabap. l. 2. c. 13.
in euang. Domin. 2. Epiphan.
Caluin. harm. in Luc. 2. 35. edit. Gal.
Caluin. harm. in Matt. 12. 48.

Caluin. harm. in Ioan. c. 2. *of her Sonnes doctrine; That she sinned by exceeding her boundes, and by intruding her selfe so far, as that she might chance to haue obscured the glory of Christ thereby;* and, *that our Sauiour made in a manner no accompt of that which the woman in the Ghospell did only extoll, which was her being his owne Mother,* as also when the Angel announceth the Incarnation of the Sonne of God, he findeth, *That she had want of fayth*, he

Caluin. harm. in Luc. 1. 34. edit. Latin. sayth, *That she did not with lesse malignity restraine the power of God, then* Zacharias *had done before vpon another occasion*, and when he hath done, the blasphemous Heretike concludeth, *Quod non sit magnoperè laborandum &c.* That there is no cause

Iouin. apud Auguſt. bær. 82. why he should take much paines in excusing the Virgin from not hauing committed some fault.

Petr. Martyr. ad c. 4. epist. ad Rom. To this let it be added, that they thinke, & often say, *That she was deliuered of our Sauiour after the same laborious, vulgar, and vncomly manner to which other women are subiect by their descendēce from Eue.*

Apud Can. l. 2. c. 8. marial. Some againe, *That she liued afterward with Ioseph, to all purposes as women vse to do with*

their

their husbands: With a thousand such other beastly blasphemyes, and heresies as these. For *Heluidius* by the testimony of *S. Hierome* was condemned as an Heretike within foure ages after Christ, for only houlding that our B. Lady did not continue in virginity after the birth of our B. Sauiour vntill the end of her mortall life: and I would to Christ that our poore Countrey did not swarme with these vile, and far worse opinions. But as the soule is infinitly to be more esteemed then the body, so may she be concluded to haue receaued more offence by *Caluins* tongue who wounded her in her soule, by his charging her thus with sin, then by these others who haue subiected her sacred body to so much shame: & yet euen in that kind, *Caluin* himselfe hath hardly gone so far as our Countrey-man *Bunny*, who imputeth to her, with a most blasphemous mouth, the hauing committed no lesse then foure mortall sinnes, in the short tyme of our Sauiours Passion. In the Preface to the Christis Directory.

And those famous, or rather infamous

Magdeburgians, who are called *Centuriatours*, being certaine *Lutheran* Doctours, who in corps and by publique Authority pretended to draw downe an historicall narration of the Church from age to age speaking in the first booke of the first Century, of the life of our B. Sauiour, tooke occasion therby to taxe most boldly & blasphemously the immaculate Mother of God, & to say, that when she lost her Sonne in the Temple, she committed so great a sinne, as that they tremble not to compare it with that first most grieuous sinne of *Eue*, and so doubt which of the two sinnes were the worse.

CHAP. IX.

THE beliefe and practise of the Holy Catholike, Apostolike, Roman Church is very different from that of these men, and hath beene most expresse in this point; for it hath, throughout the whole course of so many ages, decerned, and applyed the highest honours, vnder God, to our B. Lady, by giuing her most glorious

glorious titles, by erecting in memory of her moſt ſumptuous Temples, by enioyning Chriſtians to keep in contemplation of her moſt ſolemne feſtiuityes; and by powring out before her continuall ſupplications and prayers, that by her interceſſion of meditation, the interceſſion of Redemption which was performed by Chriſt our Lord, and could only be performed by him, may be applyed to the ſauing of mans ſoule.

When I name the Catholike, Apoſtolike, Roman Church, I meane not, by Roman, that Congregation of Chriſtians only, which is comprehended within the walls or dioceſſe of the Citty, or Sea of Rome (as ſome would fayne impoſe vpon vs, and thereby inferre an abſurdity vpon that propoſition, as if the ſame Church whereof we ſpeake, were both vniuerſall in being Catholike, and particuler in being but of the Citty of Rome:) but when I ſay the Catholike, Roman Church, I meane the Church of Chriſt which is ſpread into all the corners of the earth, but yet communicating

euery where in the same fayth, and Sacraments, doth acknowledge the Bishop of Rome for the visible & supreme Head therof vnder Christ. The dignity and eminency whereof if it be considered, & be weighed withall, how deuout it hath euer beene in tenderly honouring, & religiously praying to our B. Lady. I think there is no man of modesty, and euen common sense, who will not be induced not only to an excuse, but euen to an imitation thereof.

August. confess. l. 6. cap. 11. *Non vacat, non est inane, quod tam eminens culmen authoritatis Christianæ fidei toto orbe diffunditur.* It is no trifle, it is no matter of smal importance that the Christian fayth hath obtayned ouer the whole world such a sublime top of authority. These are the wordes of *S. Augustine*, which he spake being yet no Christian; and the same weight which that kind of discourse had against Paganisme, or Manicheisme in his tyme, the same hath it, at the least in fauour of Catholike Religiō, concerning the honour and inuocation of our B. Lady, amongst and aboue all

the

the other Saints of God, againſt Caluiniſme, or whatſouer other ſuch Innouation. *Non vacat, non eſt inane*, it is no toy, it is no contemptible thing, which the whole body of Catholikes, hath ſo long, and ſo deuoutly practiſed, concerning the honour of our B. Lady, and the need which it findeth mankind to haue of her helping hand. Yea, and a Proteſtant, that is either morally wiſe, or diſcreetly modeſt, as *S. Auguſtin* was before he was a Catholike Chriſtian, will thinke and ſpeake reuerently of this Church, though he ſhall abſtract from this beliefe, That it is the only true Church of Chriſt, and do but confeſſe (which no body in his wits will deny) that it is a congregatiõ of great Order, Wiſedome, Vertue, Learning, Extent, and Continuance.

Though indeed (whatſoeuer may be pretended by our oppoſits) it is both more true, and more euident then the Sunne is bright, That either Chriſt hath no Church at all, That the propheſyes of the old Teſtament were falſe, and, That the promiſes of the new Teſtament were

feigned, or els that this church is the true and only true Church of Christ, since all those markes, and plaine tokens, which were deliuered as belonging thereunto, do clearly apply thēselues to this Church and to no other. For what other but this can (without the impudent face of an harlot) pretend, *To haue conuerted Nations, To haue beene fostered and nursed by a longe series of Kinges and Queenes, To haue imbraced euen the very ends of the world, To haue beene espoused to the* Messias *with an indissoluble bound of Matrimony*, as was fortould by those men of God in the old Testament? Or what other then this, can with any colour affirme, *That it is the piller, and ground of Truth*, as S. Paul did witnes, That it is but *one*, That it is, and hath euer beene, and is to be euer *Visible*, That it hath beene, and euer must be *Infallible*, as is clearely to be conuinced by that one direction which our B. Sauiour gaue, *Dic Ecclesiæ*, Tell the Church: And *Si Ecclesiam non audierit, sit tibi tamquam Ethnicus & Publicanus*, let him be to thee as a Pagan, and Publican, if he obey not the

Tertull. l depræs. hær.
Vita B. Bern. l. 2. c. 7.
Beda in 6. Cant.
Ambr. epist. 13.
Ose. 2.
2. Tim. 3.

the orders of this Church. For vnles this Church were euer to be indued with *Vnity*, with *Visibility*, and with *Infallibility*, impossible it were either for that counsaile of our Sauiours to be followed (and this were to impute folly to him) or els though it were followed, it would be impossible for men to be saued by meanes therof, and that were to lay a worse note if worse may be, vpon the fountaine of all Wisedome, and goodnes? Or what other Church then this, can apply to it selfe, that Legacy, which *S. Paul* to the *Ephesians* affirmed to haue beene giuen to mankind by our Sauiour Christ, when he ascended vp to heauen, namely Doctours, and Pastours to continue from that tyme till the end of the world, that so the body of Christ might be built vp, and Christian soules be kept by the ancker of true fayth, from floating (after the fashion of Heretikes) by the windes, or waues of phantasticall and foolish doctrines. *Ephes.* 4.

No other congregation then the Catholik, will so much as pretend to ma-

ny of theſe true marks of the Church; at leaſt none but ſhe can proue that they any way belong to theirs or thē, who therfore by a miſerable neceſſity are conſtrained to hide themſelues in certaine caſtles of the aire whilſt they talke of Scripture, wherby they meane nothing els but that interpretation or conceipt of their own which the intereſt either of their profits or paſſion doth ſuggeſt. By al which I infer, that ſince we make ſo faire a claime to be the true, & neuer erring Church of Chriſt, which euen our moderate Aduerſaryes will confeſſe to be of great appearance; that doctrine which it teacheth, & from whence the honour & inuocation of our B. Lady proceedeth, ought not in any reaſon to be ſo blaſphemed, euen by them who will not yet imbrace it.

This Church hath alſo further (being inſpired and guided by the Holy Ghoſt) framed an Office of our B. Lady, that is to ſay, it hath compoſed a Seruice out of the Pſalmes, and other Scriptures, togeather with the writings of the Holy Fathers, which it commandeth to be recited

at

at ſuch tyme as her feſtiuall dayes are celebrated; and now and then it interpoſeth certaine affectuous verſicles, to ſhew the admiration wherein it hath her ſupreme dignity, through the vouchſafing which God Almighty hath pleaſed to vſe with her, in making her a fit Mother for himſelfe. Sometymes it exclameth thus, *Felix namq; es ſacra virgo Maria, & omni laude digniſſima: quia ex te ortus eſt ſol iuſtitiæ Chriſtus Deus noſter.*

And againe; *Sancta & immaculata virginitas, quibus te laudibus efferam neſcio: quia quem cæli capere non poterant, tuo gremio contuliſti! Beata es Virgo Maria quæ Dominũ portaſti Creatorem mundi: Genuiſti qui te fecit, & in æternum permanes Virgo. Beata mater, & intacta virgo glorioſa Regina mundi, intercede pro nobis ad Dominum.* Happy art thou, O ſacred Virgin Mary, and moſt worthy of all prayſe; for the Sonne of Iuſtice Chriſt our Lord is borne of thee. O thou holy and immaculate virginity. with what prayſes ſhal I extoll thee, ſince thou haſt contayned him in thy wombe, whom the heauens themſelues could not

compre-

comprehend! Bleſſed art thou, O Virgin Mary, who haſt borne our Lord the Creatour of the world: thou haſt borne him that made thee, and thou eternally remayneſt a Virgin. O bleſſed Mother and immaculate Virgin, O thou glorious Queene of the world, pray for vs vnto our Lord. In this mãner doth the Church performe to her all due honour. And in other parts of the ſame office it applyeth many other places of Scripture, and eſpecially out of the Canticles, the book of *Wiſedome*, and the *Apocalyps*, towardes the dignifying, & celebrating the praiſes of our B. Lady, veſting, as it were, her perſon, with all thoſe appellations, and other termes of honour which are there to be found in full meaſure, and among others theſe; *Veni columba mea, veni ſponſa mea, veni electa mea, veni coronaberis, pulchra vt Luna, electa vt Sol, terribilis vt caſtrorum acies ordinata, mulier amicta ſole, & Luna ſub pedibus eius. Aſtitit Regina à dextris tuis circumdata varietate*: and a thouſand ſuch paſſages as theſe are ſung by the Holy Church, in honour of our B. Lady,

Lady, as being *the Doue, the Spouse, the elect of the King of heauen, one clad, and enuironed with the Sunne, supported by the Moone, a Queene all clad with variety of riches, and standing at the right hand of God.*

Vide August. de symb. ad Catec. c. 1. Epiphā. serm. de laudibus Mariæ. Bernard. serm. in eundem locum. Apoc. 12. 1.

Which sentences of Holy Scripture howsoeuer they are also applyed otherwise, as sometymes to a Soule in grace, sometymes to *Heauenly Wisedome*, sometymes to the celestiall *Hierusalem*, yet this is no impediment why they may not also truly, and most properly be applyed to the person of our B. Lady, since the same Scripture hath seuerall sensses, and all of them may be true, so that they be not cōtradictory to one another. And the Holy spirit of God deliuering them by the pen of the Prophets, and Apostles, had seuerall regards and aymes at seuerall things to be expressed by the same words, which the Holy Fathers, and Interpretours (as children of the Catholike Church) were directed, and enabled by the same spirit to declare. Which howsoeuer it may seem strang, to such as in themselues are strangers to the truth of that which passeth in this

this particuler, yet it muſt be confeſſed to be, as I ſay, by ſuch as will not generally taxe the Holy Fathers, both of folly, and falſhood, ſince they haue expounded the Holy Scriptures according to foure ſeuerall ſenſes, namely the *Litterall*, the *Morall*, the *Anagogicall*, and the *Allegoricall*. Nay it is certayne, how ſtrange ſoeuer it may ſeeme, that the ſame Scripture hath ſometymes diuers ſenſes euen *Litterall*: and ſo hath that of, *Expedit nobis vt vnus homo moriatur pro populo, ne tota gens pereat, Filius* (a) *meus es tu, ego hodie genui te. Omnia* (b) *ſubiecisti ſub pedibus eius*: and the authority of *S. Auguſtine* alone may ſuffice to ſhew, that out of the ſame words of Scripture may be drawne, *magna copia veriſſimarum ſententiarum*, great aboundance or variety of ſenſes, which be all true. This he ſayth by occaſion of the ſeueral interpretatiõs of thoſe only words, *In principio fecit Deus cælum & terram*: In the beginning God made the heauen, and earth. And he ſheweth afterwards, why *Moyſes* may be conceiued to haue forſeen al thoſe true ſeueral ſenſes of thoſe words which

(a) *Cyril. in pſal. 2. de humana generat. Auguſt. de ætern.*

(b) *Pſal. 8. Aug. de natur. human. & Chryſ. peculiariter de Chriſto orat. 4. in ep. ad Hæbr. c. 2. Auguſt. confeſſ l. 12. c. 25. & 31.*

which ſhould afterwardes be gathered, *Per quem Deus vnus ſacras literas vera, & diuerſa viſuris multorum ſenſibus temperauit.* God did by the pen of *Moyſes*, ſo temper and dictate thoſe dimme bookes, which he wrote, as that all the ſenſes might be true, and yet differing from one another, according to the variety of interpretations which diuers men ſhould make ther-of

CHAP. X.

BVT to returne to the aforſaid Office of the Church, there are further brought in vpon occaſiō diuers paſſages of many ancient and Holy Fathers (for I will not touch vpon them of the later times) which may excite the Readers to beare all due deuotion to our B. Lady, through the pathetical and tender ſpeach which they deliuer of her. And I will accompany them which are taken out of the Breuiary with ſom others of the ſame authority & tyme. Hearken then a while whoſoeuer you be, who are ſo miſerable

as not to be deuoted to the B. Virgin, that you may perceaue how dangerous and differēt a way you take from thoſe lights and ornaments of God Church, who are ready if you will to be your guides. And note that except *S. Iohn Damaſcen*, *S. Anſelme*, and *S. Bernard*, there is none of this full Iury but aboue a thouſand yeares old.

And to beginne with the moſt ancient, *S. Irenæus* in his third book againſt hereſyes 33. Chapter, hath theſe words, *Sicut Eua inobediens &c.* As Eue by diſobedience was made the cauſe of death; ſo *Mary* was made a cauſe of ſaluation, both to her ſelfe, and to all mankind.

Athan. epiſt. ad Epict.

S. *Athanaſius* in his Epiſtle to *Epictetus*, ſayth thus: *Idcirco gratia plena &c.* Therefore is the B. Virgin called by the name of *full of grace*, becauſe ſhe did abound with all graces by the filling of the Holy Ghoſt, and was ouerſhaddowed by the vertue of the moſt high.

Cyrill. Alexan. hom. cōt. Neſtor.

S. *Cyrill* of *Alexandria* being aſſembled with other Biſhops vpon a tyme of ſolemnity, ſpake thus in a ſermon made

againſt

againſt the Heretike *Neſtorius*; *Hilarem video cœtum fidelium omnium &c*. I ſee this Congregation of all the faythfull to be full of alacrity, who are come togeather with cheerefull mindes, being called by the holy Mother of God, & yet euer Virgin *Mary*. Prayſe & glory be to thee, O Holy Trinity, who haſt conducted vs all to this ſolemnity. Praiſe alſo to thee, O thou Holy Mother of God. For thou art that precious pearle of the whole world; Thou art a lampe neuer to be extinguiſhed; The crowne of virginity; The ſcepter of true fayth; A temple not to be diſſolued, conteyning him who could within no place be contayned; A Mother and a Virgin. Bleſſed art thou amongſt women, being the parent of him, who being bleſſed came in the name of our Lord. By thee the Trinity is glorifyed; By thee the precious Croſſe is celebrated, & adored throughout the whole world. By thee heauen triumpheth, Angells and Archangells reioyce, Diuells are driuen away, and man himſelfe is recalled to heauen. By thee all creatures (once de-

teyned in the errour of Idolatry) are conuerted to the knowledg of the truth. The faythfull are come to Holy Baptiſme, & Temples are built throughout the whole world. By thee do the Nations come to pennance. What ſhal I ſay more? By thee the only begotten Sonne of God, that true light did ſhine to ſuch as ſate in darknes; By thee the Prophets did foreſhew ſaluation to the Gentils; And by thee did the Apoſtles preach it. Who can vnfold the eminency of thy prayſe, O thou Mother and virgin *Mary*? Let vs celebrate her, moſt beloued Brethren, adoring her Sonne the immaculate ſpouſe of the Church, to whome be honour and glory for all Eternityes. *Amen*.

Ephr. o. rat. de laudibus SS. Dei Matris.

S. *Ephrem* in an Oration of the prayſes of the moſt Holy Motherof God, *Intemerata prorſus q; pura &c*. The vntoucht and entierely pure virgin the Mother of God; The Queen of all men; The hope of ſuch as deſpaire; My moſt glorious and beſt Queene; More ſublime then the celeſtiall ſpirits; More pure then the Sunne beames and ſplendours; More honourable

honourable then the Cherubim, & more holy then the Seraphim.

Heare what the holy and learned S. *Ambroſe* ſayth in his booke of the Inſtitution of Virgins. *Chriſti lilia &c.* The lillyes of Chriſt are eſpecially virgines, whoſe virginity is bright & immaculate; for that Virginall wombe was the beginning, and roote, and perpetually ſpringing fountaine, from whence by that moſt powerfull example of the Mother of God, all the Quires of Virgins did proceed. *Ambr. de Inſtit. Virgin. cap. 15.*

A Maria &c. (ſayth S. *Epiphanius*) of the Virgin Mary, life was borne vnto the world, ſo that ſhe gaue life to him that liueth, and Mary was made the Mother of ſuch as liue. *Epiph. l. 3. hareſ. 73. poſt med.*

S. Hierome vpon the eleuenth Chapter of *Iſay*, *Virgam de radice &c.* Let vs vnderſtand the holy Virgin *Mary*, to be the Rod that ſpringes out of the roote of *Ieſſe*.

S. Theodoret vpon the Canticles, *Inter tot animas omnium hominum &c.* Amongſt the ſoules of all the men and wo-

men that shallbe saued, that only one is as the elected doue, who brought forth Christ, a virgin, a Mother, a mayd, who doubtles did excell in purity both the Cherubim and the Seraphim.

Aug. l. de natur. & grat.

S. *Augustine* in his booke of *Nature & Grace: Cum de peccatis agitur &c.* When there is any speach of sinne, I will make no question of the Blessed Virgin, for we know that more grace was giuen to her for the totall ouercõming of sinne, who deserued to conceaue, and to bring him forth, of whome it is euident that he had no sinne.

August. tract. de symb. ad Cath. l. 3. c. 4. tom. 9.

The same holy Father in a Treatise of the *Creed* vnto Catholikes, the third booke, and 4. Chapter, in few but massy words speaketh thus of the B. Virgin, *Per feminam &c.* death came by a woman, and life also by a woman. By *Eue* came destruction, and saluation by *Mary*.

Greg. in 1. lib. 1. c. Reg.

S. *Gregory* the great vpon the first booke and Chapter of Kinges *Potest huius montis nomine &c.* The euer most B. Virgin Mary Mother of God, may be designed by the name of this mountaine.

For

For ſhe was a mountaine who by the dignity of her election did tranſcend the altitudes of elected creaturs. Was not *Mary* a high mountaine, who that ſhe might arriue to the conception of the Eeternall *Word*, did raiſe the top of her merits aboue all the Quires of Angells, till ſhe came vnto the throne of the Deity: for of the moſt excellent dignity of this mountaine the Prophet *Iſay* doth ſay; *In the laſt dayes there ſhall be a mountaine of our Lord prepared in the top of the mountaines.* For ſhe was a mountaine in the top of mountaines, becauſe the height of *Mary* doth ſhine aboue all Saints. And ſhe is aptly called both a mountaine, and houſe, who being illuſtrated with incomparable merits, did prepare her ſacred wombe wherein the only Sonne of God might repoſe. Iſa. 2.

S. Iohn Damaſcen in his booke of *Catholike fayth*, affirmeth of our B. Lady, that *reuera Domina facta eſt &c.* She was indeed made the Lady with dominion ouer all creatures when ſhe was made the Mother of the Creatour. And in his ſecond oration of the death of the Mother *Damaſc. de fide orthodoxa,*

of God: *Clamemus cum Gabriele &c.* Let vs crye out with the Angell Gabriell, All hayle, O thou full of grace, All hayle O thou inexhausted sea of ioy, Al hayle, o thou especial lightner of our burthens; All hayle, O thou medicine of all the afflictions of our harts, All hayle, O thou holy Virgin, by whome death was banished and life introduced.

Anselm. de cõcep. Virg. & peccat. orig. c. 18.

S. Anselme in his Treatise of original sinne Chapter 18. *Decebat vt illius &c.* It was fit that the Conception of that man (he speaketh there of Christ our Saiour) should be made of the most pure Virgin, and therefore it was fit, that this virgin should most sweetly shine with so great purity then which a greater cannot be imagined vnder God, to whome God the Father resolued to giue his only Son.

S. Bernard in his sermon vpon the corporall Assumption of the B. Virgin into heauen sayth thus; *Quis cogitare sufficiat &c.* Who is able to conceaue how gloriously the Queene of the world went forward as vpon this day, and with how great entiernes of tender deuotion the whole

whole multitude of those celestiall legiõs came forth to meete her? With what canticles she was cõducted to the throne of glory? With how serene a face, with how deare a countenance, with how diuine imbracements she was receaued by her Sonne, & with that glory which became such a Sonne.

In his fourth Sermon vpon the Assumption, after he had with this protestation, *Non est quod me magis delectet &c.* There is nothing wherein I take more ioy, & so yet there is also nothing which putteth me into a greater trembling of feare, then to discourse vpon the glory of the Virgin *Mary* &c. he proceedeth shortly after to say this; *Quæ enim vel Angelica puritas &c.* What purity though Angelicall will presume to compare it selfe to this virginity, which was made worthy to become the sacred repose of the Holy Ghost? But how great and how precious was the vertue of thy humility with so great purity, with so great innocency, with a conscience wholy free from sin, yea with the fullnes of so much grace?

Whence hadſt thou humility, & ſo great humility, O thou bleſſed Creature? Indeed thou wert worthy whom our Lord ſhould regard, whoſe beauty the King ſhould deſire, by whoſe fragrant odour he might be drawne from that eternall reſting place of his Fathers boſome. Behould, O B. Virgin, we accompany thee a far off, as we may, with theſe acclamations, whileſt thou art aſcending to thy throne. Let it be an effect of thy piety to make knowne vnto the world that grace which thou foundſt with God, by obteyning through thy holy prayers pardō for ſuch as are faulty, cure for the ſicke, ſtrength of mind for the weake, comfort for the afflicted, and help and liberty for ſuch as are in danger. And now in this day of thy ſolemnity & ioy, by thee, O gracious Queen, let thy Sonne Chriſt Ieſus our Lord (who is God for euer bleſſed aboue all thinges) beſtow the giftes of his grace vpon vs his poore ſeruants, who with prayſe are calling vpon the ſweet name of *Maria*.

Theſe are ſome of thoſe paſſages, which

which I find recorded amongſt many others of ſome few Fathers, who partely ſpeake, though but compendiouſly, in the Roman Office or Breuiary, and ſome other few which I take out of their own vndoubted workes, whereby the Reader may ſee not only the iudgement of the Church, but how expreſſe, and earneſt the moſt excellent members thereof haue beene, and how deuoutly they haue not only celebrated the praiſes, but recommended thēſelues to our B. Ladyes prayers And there would neuer be an end if I ſhould ſtriue to deliuer the almoſt infinite attributes of excellēcy which they haue giuen to her, which ſome of her deuout ſeruants, hauing gathered out of their works, they grow euen to fil whole bookes. Among others the *Margarita*, & *Hebdomada Mariana* may be conſidered, where the Reader ſhall find *S. Irenæus*, *S. Cyprian*, *S. Athanaſius*, *S. Ephrem*, *S. Epiphanius*, *S. Ambroſe*, *S. Chryſoſtome*, *S. Auguſtine*, S. *Gregory*, *S. Iohn Damaſcen*, *S. Anſelme*, *S. Bernard* with the reſt of theſe later ages, who haue al ſtriued to expreſſe

themſelues, as there you may find particulerly cyted, in calling her; The window of heauen; The treaſure of the Diuinity; The ſolace of the world; The woman which transfuſed grace into vs; The enſigne of fayth; A cauſe of ſaluatiō to mankind; The throne of the Diuinity; The Captaine Generall; The fountaine of all Conſolation; The ioy of Saints; The Queene of Angells; The Mother of Mercy; The mother of the liuing; The ſuccour of ſuch as are in dāger; A Queen aſſiſting, and raigning at the right hand of her Sonne; The vnlocker of Heauen gates; The ſcepter which commandeth all; The roote of glory; The roſe which hath perfumed all thinges with heauenly odours; A temple beautifyed by the holy Ghoſt; She who confoundeth all hereticall prauity; The ſcepter of orthodoxall Fayth; A mountaine of our Lord prepared in the top of the mountaines.

Innumerable I ſay are the Attributes of honour which the Holy Fathers haue giuen to this ſacred Virgin, and many of them haue beene deliuered, though with great

great profit, and piety, yet in ſuch affectuous tearmes, as the Catholikes at this day dare ſcarcely vſe, through the extreme malignity of our Aduerſaryes and hers: becauſe as there is no word which may not haue diuers ſignifications; ſo they will be ſure to interprete them euer in the worſt ſenſe: whereas Charity requireth iuſt the contrary. And if they proceeded according to the rule thereof, they would neuer charge, either the holy Fathers, or vs their children with derogating any thing from Almighty God, by the honour we do to our B. Lady. But whenſoeuer they find vs to aſcribe any quality or title to her, which to a weake, or wrong iudgment may ſeeme only to belong to him; they may know once for all, that we impute ſuch thinges to God as to the Tree, from which ſhe tooke her growth; he is the fountaine, ſhe is the ſtreame; he is the great Artificer and primary cauſe, and ſhe a moſt eleuated Inſtrument; he is the Sunne, and ſhe the Beame, whereby he hath communicated his light, and heat to this darke & frozen world

world of ours.

So that they need not thus peruerſ-ly continue to aske vs what it is, that we can ſay more in honour of Chriſt, then we ſay in honour of our B. Lady? For we can ſay, and we do ſay according to theſe moſt true profeſſions, and proteſtations following, which may for euer ſerue to the iuſtification of our whole practiſe heerein, and for the diſcouery of their either folly, or malice that oppoſe it.

We profeſſe this difference between the excellency of Chriſt our Lord, and that of the B. Virgin, That the B. Virgin is no more but a pure creature, but that Chriſt is God, and ſo there is no compariſon at all betweene the excellency of God, and her; That in reſpect of God ſhe is infinitely leſſe then the leaſt graine of duſt is leſſe then the whole world; That it was the only goodnes of God, that choſe her firſt out of all mankind to be his Mother; That all her greatnes, and perfection dependeth vpon the firſt grace that God gaue her. This I ſay, is that we

all

all profeſſe, and this being ſuppoſed and kept inuiolable, it is euident that whatſoeuer honour or excellency we aſcribe to her, ſo far we are from robbing God Almighty of his honour by it, as that on the contrary ſide we highly honour him, in acknowledging his vnſpeakable benignity and bounty towardes mankind, a part whereof he hath ſo much enobled, as to make it the Mother, and the ſo worthy Mother of Chriſt our Lord, who is alſo God.

Now, ſince the honour we do to the moſt ſacred Virgin, proceedeth only from this roote, & the dependance thervpon: let it be conſidered what a ridiculous propoſition this is? That we diſhonour Chriſt by the exceſſe of honour which we do to the Mother of God, whome yet we chiefly honour, becauſe ſhe was his Mother, and whome we honour not at all beyond the capacity of a pure creature. Theſe propoſitions being then ſuppoſed, it wll be leudly done heerafter, by ſuch as ſhall take exceptions at the termes wherewith the Catholike Church,

Church, or her children, haue thought fit to celebrate our B. Ladyes memory. For if they be not rather ſchoole boyes, then ſchoole men, if they be not ſuch as had rather find a knot in a ruſh, then vntye it, they will follow the counſaile of S. *Auguſtine* in his booke *de vtilitate credendi cap.* 7. That whenſoeuer any phraſe, or ſpeach is vſed by Catholikes which may ſound leſſe plauſible, men are to trauaile vp and downe ouer a whole world, if need be, for the finding of an excuſable interpretation therof, rather then to inferre therby that the doctrine or practiſe of the Catholike Church is impure.

And ſo much the rather are they bound to do it, becauſe there is no word which hath not in this reſpect, the nature of a Medall, that is, it hath a right ſide, and a wrong; and ſo hath euery garment which they weare. And as he were a fooliſh ſeruant that would apparell his Maiſter with the wrong ſide outward, becauſe there are two ſides: ſo they are to be contemned, and caſt out as wranglers who wil needs take the words of another man

man in the ill ſenſe, eſpecially when he proteſteth to meane them in the good; & moſt certaine it is that by the ſame meaſure whereby they would take honour from our B. Lady, vnder the pretence which they make of our vſing termes that are ſubiect to the miſconſtruction of malice, a man may as well take credit from the holy Scripture it ſelfe which ſayth; That God Almighty hath armes, and leggs, and paſſions of the mind like mortall and ſinnefull creatures.

For if thoſe wordes be not vnderſtood by a Religious diſcretion, that mãner of ſpeach will proue as vnſafe at leaſt as any other that we vſe, when there is queſtion of doing honour to our B. Lady. But as our caſe ſtandeth, we need not, that our Aduerſaryes ſhould put themſelues to ouer much paynes, ſince by the profeſſions that are already made it is euident, how all titles of honour vnder God may agree to the B. Virgin, and not only that they may be giuen without ſin, but that it is both piety in them that do it, and impiety in them that oppoſe to it.

What

What dishonour is it to an earthly King, if his Mother be called the Queen of his Countrey: the kingdom is known to belong in right of propriety to the King, and she leaueth not to be a subiect though she haue the honour to be called, & to be the Queen? Or what dishonour were it to a King, if that Queene were called the Queen of his subiects, of whose persons howsoeuer the King alone can dispose in rigour, yet who among them (being indeed a loyall, & louing subiect to the King) would not hould himselfe for happy, in being able to execute any iust commandment of his Mothers?

Thus thinges do passe euen heere on earth, and it is well that they passe so; for these are not apish customes, nor humorous inuentions, nor effects of seruile flattery, but they flow from reason, and nature, and they are warrantable by all lawes, both diuine and humane. And when any thing is so warrantable, a man may well inferre, that in the spirituall Kingdome of Christ such thinges are practised with much more eminency, &

perfe-

perfectiō. Nor doth it by infinite degrees ſo well become an earthly Monarch, that his Mother be acknowledged for the Queene of his Countrey, and of his ſubiects, as it becometh the Humanity of Chriſt our Lord, that the ſacred Virgin (from whome he tooke all the humanity that he had, vniting it hypoſtatically to the God-head) ſhould haue the honour to be the Queene of heauen which is his Contrey, and the Queene of Angells & Saints who are his ſubiects; and who are glorious, and immortall by the merits of that bloud which he tooke from her alone, and vnited it to himſelfe.

CHAP. XI.

THvs ſtandeth the caſe concerning the Attributes of honour, which Catholikes are glad they haue the grace to giue our B. Lady: and touching the other point of her inuocation, which is alſo both auowed, & deuoutly practiſed by the Fathers, whome I haue alleadged, and with whom, and in whoſe company

Concil. Calced. act. 1. Dionys. Areop. 3. Eccles. hierarch. Ambr. l. de viduis vltra medium. Auguſt. ſerm. 84. in Ioan. Athan. ſerm. de annunt. Deiparæ circa finē. Baſil. orat. in 40. Mar. &c.

I might cyte the reſt, I will leaue for the preſent to preſſe our Aduerſaryes with their authority, remitting the more patient Reader to whome he will of an hundred Catholike Writers, who haue clearely euicted this point of controuerſy: & for my part (who could not paſſe it ouer wholy in ſilence) I will in very few words debate how the caſe ſtandeth with them in reaſon, according to the grounds of their Religion.

If inuocation of the Saints in generall, and in particuler of the glorious Virgin be reiected, our Aduerſaryes muſt doe it firſt (if they will be true to their own grounds) for reaſons drawne from Holy Scripture. When they preſſe vs to proue it by teſtimony therof, they are iuſtly tould, that they proceed impertinētly. For they are the men who ſhould proue it to be forbidden by Scripture, & not we that it is expreſly enioyned. For vnles it be forbidden, they cannot vpon that reaſon diſclaime from the vſe thereof, who doe themſelues practiſe diuers things, whereof there is no expreſſe com-

mandment in Holy Scripture, as namely they *baptize Infants*, and they *obserue the Sabbaoth vpon the Sunday &c.* The later of which points is so far from being cõmanded, that it rather seemeth to be forbidden, when the Saturday is clearely assigned for that purpose. Nay *the eating of bloud, and strangled meats*, was prohibited to the Christiãs of the Primitiue Church which yet the Caluinists make no scruple to eate as well as we, which in vs is no offence, who obey the Church, which telleth vs that *the tyme of keeping the Sabbaoth was ceremoniall*, and consequently abrogated by the comming of Christ, & that the *Precept* about abstaining from those meats was but temporary, and that now the date therof is expired. But our Aduersaryes, who say they are only guided by that which is deliuered to them in Scripture, are conuinced by their owne practise to be Hypocrits; and may iustly, be doubly accompted so, if whilest they practise those thinges which are expresly against the Commandment of Holy Scripture, they do yet reiect the Inuoca-

Exod. 20

Act. 15.

tion of Saints, only becauſe we do not ſhew as they ſay, that it is expreſly inioyned by Scripture.

Two reaſons they vſe to bring againſt it, the former whereof pretendeth to ſhew, that it is not lawfull, the latter that it is not conuenient. But whoſoeuer marketh their proceeding well, ſhall find the weaknes of their cauſe by this, that howſoeuer theſe reaſons be of very different nature, and independent of one another; yet if they be well encountred, they neuer ſticke to either of theſe pretences a part, but are euer hopping, or rather halting from one to the other. The former of them is, That (forſooth) inuocation of Saints is both derogatory to the honour of God, and iniurious to the mediation of Chriſt; and then they diſplay their colours (for they are but colours) *Gloriam meam alteri non dabo: Vnus eſt mediator Chriſtus Ieſus; Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis &c.* I will not giue my glory to any other: There is one mediatour Chriſt Ieſus: Come vnto me all you that labour, and the like. But what of all this?

Iſa. 42.
1. Tim. 2.
Matt. 11.

Therefore

Therefore Christians may not pray to Saints? Who seeth not the childishnes of this consequence? And when once we conuince them, that it is of no dishonour to God, they haue nothing to say, but that the Saints cannot heare vs; and when againe we proue that the Saints do heare vs, they returne to their impertinency of telling vs, that we dishonour God.

But howsoeuer to the first place of Scripture it is truly answered, that the *Glory* which there is spoken of, is the *Glory* incommunicable, and only due, and proper vnto God himselfe; but that the *Glory* giuen by vs to Saints in beseeching them to pray for vs, is both so far of an inferiour nature, as that we impart it to sinnefull men and women, as often as we recommend our selues to their prayers; and we also giue by them, a particuler increase of honour to God, in acknowledging the mercy he sheweth to his creaturs whilest he enableth his better seruants to assist vs.

To the second, no more occurreth to be sayd, but that Christ our Lord is the

only mediatour of Redemption, whereof the Apoſtle ſpeaketh in that place; but if he were alſo the only mediatour of Interceſſion betweene God and man, not only ſhould all the Children in England be ill brought vp, when they are appointed to aske their Parents bleſſing, but the holy Apoſtle himſelfe when he commended the neceſſity of his ſoule to the prayers of the *Romans*, had committed a moſt iniu-
Rom. 15. rious act againſt the Sauiour of the world whoſe fayth he preached.

The third place breedeth ſo little difficulty, as that it ſcarce deſerueth an anſwere. For our B. Sauiour therein exhorteth all men who were either ouerburthned with the obligations of the old Law, or frighted with the horrour of their ould conſciences, that they would reſort to him, as to one that would deliuer them from both. But he was far from diuerting the members of his body from participating with the reſt of their owne communion, and from approaching to his mercy, by the meanes of his deereſt ſeruants, whether they liued ſtill in this earthly

earthly pilgrimage, or were transplanted into that Garden of Eternall glory. And if the meaning of these passages of Holy Scripture had been such as the Caluinists pretend, it were strang that no one Father of the Church in any age should interprete them towards the impugnation of the inuocation of Saints.

Nay euen by the Scripture it selfe which cannot be contrary to Scripture, we are taught that this place doth contribute nothing to the Caluinists opinion; since we find diuers instances of men, that came to God by meanes of the prayers of other men, who yet were so farre from derogating therby, either from the glory of God, or their owne good otherwise, as that therby they obtayned their iust desires. There was a tyme when Almighty God made the children of *Israël* know, that he would not pardon them, but by the meanes of such prayers as his seruant *Moyses* should make in their behalfe. And the irreuerend friends of *Iob* were instructed by God himselfe, that if they would obtaine remission of their *Exod.* 32. *Iob.* 42.

sinnes, they should make intercession to *Iob* that he might pray for them, expressing plainly that for his sake, and at his suite, they should find such fauour as would haue beene denyed them for their owne. Nor hath any reason beene euer yet alleadged, why it should be of dishonour to Almighty God, that men should recommend themselues to the prayers of Angells and Saints, & that it should not be more dishonourable to him, that we should inuocate and pray sinnefull men to intercede for vs.

The second reason which they bring against the inuocation of Saints, is because they say, *they cannot heare vs*. Let this therfore be considered of, and let thē take no more of the former, since these depend not vpon one another. It is euident in the history of *Tobias*, by the relation of the Archangell *Raphael*, that he offred vp the ould mans deuotions of prayers and almes to the acceptance of Almighty God: But this Booke forsooth must be Apocriphall. If they meane not also to cast Christ out of the Canon,

Tob. 12.

what

what answere can be made to that amorous speach of his, which telleth vs, *that the Angells of heauen do so reioyce at the conuersion of sinners?* Or what to the testimony of the beloued disciple, to whome this amongst other thinges was reuealed, *That the Angells were still offering vp their prayers which were made vpon earth?* We are taught also by *Truth* it selfe, that the Saints are as the Angells of heauen: and to conuince the Caluinists in one, is to do it in both. But can either of them offer vp our prayers, vnlesse they know them to be such? Or can they reioyce at my conuersion vnles they see the acts of my contrition, and of the fayth wherby I beleeue the promises of Christ in generall; and of hope whereby I apprehend, and apply them in particuler; and of the charity whereby I am grafted as a liuing branch into that true vine, and in a most particuler manner of the desires I haue of their prayers for me? It is the part of a mad man to call these thinges in question.

Luc. 15.

Apoc. 8.

Matt. 22.

Againe, the Patriarch *Iacob* when *Gen. 49.*

he was vpon the point to leaue this world bequeathed his children to the protectiō of his good Angell, beseeching him that as he had preserued him, so he would also blesse them. S. *Iohn* the Euangelist in the very entrance of the *Apocalyps* in these words, *Gratia vobis & pax ab eo qui est, & qui erat, & qui venturus est, & à septem spiritibus*, beseecheth God and the seauen spirits reigning with him to be gracious to them. And though *Dines* in the Ghospell were a damned soule, yet he was not condemned for praying to *Abraham* after he was dead; and much lesse can it be affirmed, but that *Abraham* heard his prayer though it were not graunted. The Angells therefore and the Saints may euen out of Scripture be proued to heare our prayers, since we find thereby that men prayed to Saints without any note of that folly, which would haue beene done to them, if the Saints had not heard their prayers.

Apoc. c. 1.

Luc. 15.

Moreouer since the Scripture teacheth vs otherwise, that *Onias*, *Ieremias*, and other Saints, after they had departed

2. Mach. 15.

out

out of this life, did instanily, and incessantly make their prayers for the inhabitants of this world; what inconuenience can be imputed by our Aduersaryes to the beliefe we haue, that in his face who seeth all things, they see also the prayers we make to him by their meanes? And since we all professe that the Saints of heauen are completely happy, how enuious deserue they to be accompted who would abridge them of all power to help & heare miserable creatures, who ranke themselues vnder their patronage, and recommend themselues earnestly to their assistance? Not as they would do to God vpon whome their good originally dependeth, and from whome all grace and glory floweth; but as to his friends, and fauorits, who on the one side haue had experimentall knowledg of our miseryes and on the other side haue beene assumed to the reward of eternall happynes, and are as so many conueyances, and rich conducts of celestiall graces to the soules of men.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

THERE is no article of our Religion which is more impugned by the enemy of mankind, then this of Saints: & I could name a great Caluiniſt, and a great man that liued not long agoe, who could patiently inough be tould that he was not truly called to the place he held, who yet when there was ſpeach of the inuocation of the B. Virgin, grew abruptly into ſuch a paſſion, or rather fury, as that he ſeemed to be little better then poſſeſſed. And as all of them are extremely auerſe in the generality of praying to Saints, ſo particulerly it hath place when there is no queſtion of honouring, or imploring the ayde of our B. Lady. But it hath pleaſed Almighty God in his goodnes, that after the rate of their malice who impugne this article; ſo is the euidence, whereby they are to be conuinced, plaine, and teſtifyed not only by the practiſe of the Church, the expreſſe inference of Holy Scripture, the conformity

mity with nature and reaſon, but with infinite arguments of miracles which God hath ſet as ſo many ſeales vpon this Truth.

It is ſtrang (and would be incredible, if we were tould by leſſe then experience it ſelfe) that there ſhould be ſuch a deale of infidelity in the world, as to make men doubt, and of impudence as to make them deny, that the power and gift of miracles is ſtill in the Church, & that they haue beene abundantly wrought by the prouidence and power of God, in proofe of inuocation of Saints, & aboue all of the glorious, and immaculate Virgin the *Mother*, the *Daughter*, and the *Spouſe* of God. There is no corner of the Chriſtian Catholike world, which is not full of them; but no tyme or place will be able more redily to riſe vp in iudgment againſt our Caluiniſts, then the mercy of this kind which God hath ſhewed, in honour of the ſacred Virgin, in theſe very dayes of ours, and euen in the next confines of our Country.

For they are great numbers of moſt certaine

certaine miracles which haue beene wrought in *Brabant* neere to *Sichem*, in a Chappell there deuoted to our B. Lady. The storyes of the men, and women that haue receaued miraculous cure by the prayers of the B. Virgin, to whome they recommended themselues; after exact, and seuere examination of the parties themselues, of the persons who knew them both before and after, of whole Colledges of Phisitians & Surgeons who had beene formerly priuy to their infirmityes, haue been proued, and inrolled in the records of principall Cittyes. Yea & the prouidence of God hath beene such, as to make some one of these miracles, fall vpon the most known begging cripple of a whole Country, and of whome for his notorious deformity from his mothers wombe, togeather with the importunity of his begging, all the states of the Court, and Towne from the *Archduke*, and *Infanta* themselues, to the meanest Tradesman in *Bruxells* haue taken precise and perfect knowledge. There was I say a most impotent lame creature, who

Iohn Clement.

came

came deformed out of his mothers womb (and by occasion thereof he was her death) whose knees by continuall cleauing to his breast, had made deep holes therein, whose leggs hung downe like a couple of drum-stickes, and who in his life had neuer made one pase, but on his hands and hipps; this man, if he was not rather a monster, they all saw when he was thus, and within a fortnight after (when he had beene miraculously, and in an instant cured by the prayers of the most gracious, and glorious Queene of heauen in that Chappell deuoted to her selfe) they saw him againe of a good stature, of good proportion, of good health and strength. And not only he was seen by them, but many of those noble English Gentlemen who accompanyed the Earle of *Hartford* in his Embassage to that Court, did also see him, and speake with him, and so may yet as many more as wil in *Bruxells*, where he continueth to this day, and his name is *Iohn Clement*.

They are wont to tell vs, I know not what of counterfaited miracles; and

I doubt not but diuers may haue beene counterfaited, and that euen in the Apostles dayes, as well as ours: but so far off is that from prouing that there are no true miracles, as this, would be a ridiculous inference: The Kings hand is counterfeited, therfore the King knoweth not how to write his name. It would rather hould on the otherside, That becauſe ſometims either for pride, or profit ſome men are ſo wicked as to counterfeite miracles, it is an euident ſigne that true miracles are wrought ſometymes, which no man would els be ſo ſottiſh as to counterfaite, as no man would counterfeite the Kings hand, if the King could not write.

But howſoeuer, I aſſure the Reader in the word of a Chriſtian, and as in the preſence of God, who needeth not that any man ſhould tell a lye in his behalfe, and who will grieuouſly puniſh ſuch impoſtures whereſoeuer he findeth them, That the Church our Mother deteſteth all ſuch impotent, & impure proceeding; and excommunicateth ſuch as concurre to the countenancing therof. And as by

occaſion

occasion of the frequẽt miracles wrought lately in diuers parts of *Brabant*, there haue beene some found so wicked, as to the vttermost of their power, to make some very few false miracles passe for true ones; so (the prouidence of God working by the prudence of such as haue the office of looking into those matters) they haue beene detected, and grieuously punished with whipping, hauing their tongues bored through, and being banished out their Countrey, as appeareth vpon record in *Bruxells*.

And in those parts where miracles haue beene so frequently seen in these later tymes, the examination of the truth of them doth not (as God would haue it) lye there in the handes of Ecclesiasticall persons (whome the rage of heresy is wont to charge with at least conniuency in this point, if not collusion) but the custome hath beene of many yeares, for the secular Magistrates to take knowledge thereof, who will not be pretended euen by our Aduersaryes to be so partiall as those others.

Now, for aſmuch as concerneth the truth, or falſhood of our miracles, although it ſhould be true that the moſt part of them are wholy falſe (which yet is no more poſſible then that the whole world, except our Aduerſaryes, ſhould be all growne fooles or knaues) yet if all that were graunted, and that yet either they ſhall confeſſe, or it may be iuſtifyed that any one miracle was euer wrought by God vpon the prayers made to our B. Lady, with the inuocation of her ayde, (which truth the Diuell himſelfe is not ſo dogged, or ſo damned as to deny) one of theſe two thinges will follow, that either Almighty God hath cooperated ſo far to a falſe doctrine, as to credit it by ſupernaturall meanes (which cannot be conceiued without blaſphemy) or els that the inuocation of Saints, and in particuler of the immaculate and moſt glorious Virgin, cannot be impugned, or denyed without hereticall impiety.

And if the inferēce of one true miracle be ſo pregnant, what will that be which may be made from ſo many hundreds, which

which howſoeuer they be moſt euidently true, and moſt eaſily knowne to be ſo, we are the leſſe to wonder at the incredulity of our Aduerſaryes, through the doctrine which is deliuered in the perſon of *Abraham*, and recorded by the Euangeliſt S. *Luke*, where he ſayth that the friends of *Diues*, who then ſuruiued, *had Moyſes among them and the Prophets, and if they refuſed to heare them, neither would they beleeue though one ſhould riſe to them from the dead*. By changing only the termes it falleth out to be the Caluiniſts caſe, who hauing the Church of Chriſt in ſuch a viſible, and vndoubted manner before their eyes, do yet conteſt, yea and deteſt the authority thereof; for the puniſhment of which peruerſnes, the moſt vndoubted miracles which are wrought by God, in confirmation of the doctrine which ſhe teacheth, are denyed to be true by them who haue eyes, and ſee not, who haue harts, and vnderſtand not, but are vncapable of all inſtruction; and which dayly ripen towardes damnation if they free them not from ſinning thus againſt

Luc. 16.

Luc. 8.

their conſcience, as the Iewes did notwithſtanding the infinite miracles of our Sauiour Chriſt, which yet they would neuer be drawn to acknowledge, but did impute thoſe argûments of his Omnipotency, either to colluſion with the parties who were cured, or to the vſe of Sorcery in caſting out ſome Diuels by the help of others.

The corporall miracles wrought by God at the interceſſion of our B. Lady are in a manner innumerable; yet are they few in comparíſon of the ſpirituall miracles, which are dayly ſeene by the conuerſion of ſoules to Gods ſeruice, through the prayers of the Mother of God and vs. It is moſt certainely true and knowne to be ſo, that innumerable ſinners haue beene reduced to pennance before their death, to which grace they were neuer knowne to haue had any other diſpoſition, but by ſome tendernes of deuotion, though imperfect, which in their harts they euer carryed to our B. Lady. Innumerable they are who only comming into thoſe Sanctuaryes, where

God

God hath been most honoured in the deuotion borne to his B. Mother (as particulerly in that holy house of *Loretto*) and there hauing recommended themselues (though vnworthily inough) to our B. Lady, they haue yet found themselues, sometymes strocken downe with the horrible feare of Gods iudgmentes, sometymes raised vp with an extraordinary hope of mercy, sometymes strocken throughwith reflecting vpon the vglines and baseness of sinne, as that in the same very instant they haue resolued vpon a whole change of their liues, without taking any longer tyme then of so many minutes as might conduct them, and cast them at the feet of a Ghostly Father, for the making of entire Restitutions, the quitting of sensuall conuersations, the deposing of mortall, or rather immortall emnityes, and the performing of such other heroicall, and high acts of mind; which as they cannot be purchased but by the infinite merit of Christs passion, so that is neuer more comfortable, and effectually applyed, then by the meanes

of our B. Ladyes ſacred protection, and deare prayers. And although the acts & records of theſe ſpirituall miracles be not ſo well kept in parchment as are the corporall; yet I appeale to the conſcience of obſeruing and curious Catholikes, which cannot faile to beare witnes with me of this truth, that the bowells of our B. Ladyes compaſſion do by the prouidence of God extend themſelues as much more frequently to the ſtrang cure of ſoules then of bodyes, as the body is leſſe conſiderable then the ſoule: in ſo much
Luca. as a whole City in *Italy* hath been found vpon ſome deuotion which it hath taken to our B. Lady, to make within the ſpace of a few years ſuch a totall change from vice to vertue and piety, as there is difference betweene a diſorderly Tauerne, and a deuout Church.

In the ſame manner if the State of *Brabant*, and the Prouinces adioyning (for as much as concerneth Morality, or Religion) be conſidered, and the difference well weighed concerning the great example of vertue, and manners, and the

the integrity of Fayth, to the contrary in both theſe reſpects, whereby thoſe countryes were indangered vntill the miracles (wrought by the interceſſion of our B. Lady, neere *Sichem*, and other places) made them caſt a quicker eye of humble deuotion towardes her: If it be conſidered I ſay, how all the ſtates of people are admirably improued ſince that tymé, all ſuch, as togeather with common ſenſe haue not the poyſon of preiudicate paſſiõ in their harts, and heades, will acknowledge the powerfull and gracious hand of our B. Lady in this heauenly worke, and will not faile to eſteeme it for a ſpirituall miracle.

It is tyme that I grow to a concluſion, and I will procure to tye it vp in as ſtraite a compaſſe as I can. I haue endeauoured to ſhew, how highly our B. Lady is honoured by the teſtimony of holy Scripture, and to remoue ſuch obiections as her Aduerſaryes take from thence, whereby to do her diſparagement. I haue ſhewed her Genealogy, her Beauty, her perfection of vertue which filled the

whole world with heroicall actions. I haue accompanyed that discourse, with shewing how the whole Church hath imployed it selfe in her deuotion, & how the ancient, most holy, and most learned Fathers haue endeauoured to excell one another in piety towardes her, wherein the Sectaryes of our tyme are as wholly vnlike them as in other thinges. I haue offered to the Readers consideration the authority both of corporall, and spiritual miracles, wherby Almighty God hath as it were laboriously concurred, in this age of ours, towardes the planting of a Trophey to our B. Lady in the harts of all men. Happy are they who meane to take occasion heereby, either to begin, or to increase in a most reuerend, and filiall affection towardes her: and most happy should I accompt my selfe, if the little which I haue beene able to say, or doe, might cause some few mites, after the example of this of myne, to bé cast into the rich Treasury of her Prayses.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

BVT it is to be considered (for now I chiefly speake to my fellow-Catholikes) that the knowledge of our B. Ladyes greatnes, and goodnes must not go for a speculatiue, but for a practical kind of knowledge, because it doth *excitare animum ad amorem*, excite the mind of man to loue, as also it must be remembred that true loue is not idle, but operatiue, and doth shew it selfe by a conformity of the will towardes that of the partie beloued. And therfore as in the beginning of this discourse, I moued my Reader to cõtract friendship with the Queen of Angells (for as her Humility holp to make her so, so her greatnes maketh her not yet the lesse humble, or depriueth her of vouchsafing to contract an indissoluble league of amity with the meanest of those soules, for which the Son of God and her was pleased to dye) so now in the end of it, I can aduise nothing more to purpose, then that the law of true friend-

ſhip towardes her may be performed, which is *idem velle*, and *idem nolle*, to will, and not will the ſame thinge. We haue already ſeene how ſhe ſtood affected in this life, al which was ſpent with extrem ioy of hart in Pouerty, Chaſtity, Recollection, Mortification, Humility, Patience, and Charity. The thinges that ſhe cared not for, were the contrary of all thoſe vertues, & now that ſhe is aſſumed both in body and ſoule, into that height of glory which exceedeth the capacity of all the reſt of Creatures put togeather, what other thing can ſhe will, in reſpect of her ſelfe, but the good Will of God; and what other thing can ſhe wil concerning vs, but that euery one in his ſeueral calling ſhould adore with her the ſame Will of God, & procure to ariue at that iourneys end, by thoſe wayes which ſhe hath traced out for our wandring ſteps.

It will not become me to deliuer any opinion, or to giue any aduiſe of the particuler deuotions, which men ſhould do wel to nouriſh in themſelues, towards this B. Lady. The natures, & affections,

and

and ſpirits of men are different, and it would be hard for a wiſer man then my ſelfe to chance faire, in the giuing of any ſuch addreſſe. The moſt generally imbraced deuotiõs which are performed to her be two. The former whereof is the reciting of the Roſary, which was caſt into that method by that great Patriarch *S. Dominicke*, the Founder of a moſt floriſhing Order. It is a moſt excellent kind of prayer, compounded both of mentall & vocall. The Vocall conſiſting all of *Pater Noſters*, and *Ave Maria's* (which are alſo of that kind the moſt excellent prayers) and the Mentall part, hauing no leſſe matter for the ſubiect, then all the principall Myſteryes of our B. Sauiours incomprehenſible Incarnation, his moſt admirable life, his moſt dolorous Paſſion, and moſt glorious Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion.

The other is of the *Sodality* of our B. Lady, ſo called by the ſociety which men haue one with another, in doing her honour and ſeruice, and conſequently in being happy by her aſſiſtance. It was principally

cipally instituted in remembrance of her most glorious *Assumption*. The practise thereof consisteth in mens resoluing at their first entrance, vpon a renouation of their life, by making then a generall confession, and by growing afterwardes in spirit through the frequenting of Sacraments at certaine tymes, vnder the happy conduct and direction of the Fathers of the Society of *Iesus*. And in particuler, besides the fasting vpon the eues of all our B. Ladyes feasts, and the recyting of those Psalmes, and Prayers euery day whereof her Office is composed, it doth recommend a carefull and dayly examination of the conscience, especially for the getting and keeping of that purity, which maketh the soule so gratefull in the sight of God. They meet togeather at least once a weeke, and then they receaue light and help towards the performing both of that which hath beene sayd already, as also for the exercising of such workes of charity, whether they be corporall or spirituall, as in their seuerall callinges they can reach vnto, namely

visiting

visiting the sicke, burying of the dead, releasing of prisoners, reconciling of enemies, and the like. And both to this *Sodality*, and to that other company of the Rosary, great Indulgences are applyed by the Sea Apostolike, and the particulers aswell of priuiledge as obligation, may easily be learnt, by such as will, of their Ghostly Father.

As for priuate deuotions some exercise themselues in saying their Beades, in contemplation of the most holy actions of our B. Lady: Others say the holy Office before mentioned, which the Church hath composed in her prayse of Psalmes, and Lessons taken out of Holy Scripture for that purpose: Others recite her Letanyes, wherby she is both highly prayed, and by her principall attributes prayed vnto: Some fast vpon the Saturday, because that day is particulerly dedicated to her seruice: Some take a discipline or weare a haircloth in vnion of the spiritual Martyrdome that she suffered: Some make a vow of Chastity in conformity with her more then Angelicall puri y:

And

And ſome there be who giue often almes for her ſake with as good a wlll as if it were for the relieſe of her wonted pouerty.

Theſe deuotions with many others are performed by good Chriſtians in the Catholike Church, wherwith to honour the Mother of God. Let euery man continue in that, wherin he findeth himſelfe moſt to profit; for there is none of them which procureth not, to the reuerend vſers thereof, extraordinary comforts in this life, and which layeth not vp incomparable rewards for the next. I only deſire leaue, that I may expreſſe a poore thought of myne. It is, that for as much as our B. Lady hath the office of aſſiſting our ſoules when they are to depart out of this life (as doth euidently appeare by the practiſe of the Church which commandeth her children to call dayly & hourely vpon her for that purpoſe) I thinke it would be profitable, and nothing painefull (for ſuch as haue the means) to giue dayly (by way of addition to their other deuotions) ſome little almes, though it were

were but a penny (or euen leſſe rather then nothing, where leſſe coyne is to be found) in honour of the immaculate Cō-ception of our B. Lady, to which miſery Engliſh Catholiks haue reaſon to be particulerly deuoted (becauſe in *England* it grew ſooneſt to be moſt declared) & this to be offered to the end that ſhe may be pleaſed in particuler manner to aſſiſt, & comfort their ſoules in that fearefull paſſage.

Such as will not charge their memoryes to call this to mind, or will not trouble their handes in diſpoſing of ſo miſerable an almes, ſhall do wel (though yet leſſe well) in commanding ſome very honeſt ſeruant to do that duty; but with this further caution, that if by negligence the almes of one day ſhould be forgotten, the next day it muſt not faile to be doubled; and they who are ſo poore as to want this meanes, whether they be Religious perſons or ſecular, may inſteed of that litle almes make ſome litle prayer in honour of our B. Lady, in contemplation of the ſame Myſtery, and in

expectation

expectation of the ſame benefite: I haue notheard of a ſhorter, or a ſweeter prayer then this which was vſed by that holy Archbiſhop of *Canterbury S. Anſelme*, and may in this caſe be thrice repeated, *Pie Domine Ieſu, parce ſeruo Matris tuæ. Amen.* O deare Lord Ieſus, forgiue the ſeruant of thy Mother. Amen. And I haue alſo knowne this other, vſed by ſome great ſeruants of God, and with admirable ſucceſſe in their neceſſityes, *Maria Ieſu, ſponſa Ioſeph, per immaculatã Conceptionem tuam, & puriſſimam Virginitatem tuam adiuua me.* O Mary the Mother of Ieſu, & the ſpouſe of Ioſeph, by thy immaculate conception: and thy pure virginity I beſeech thee to aſſiſt me. For as we cannot better expreſſe our loue to Chriſt our Lord, then by giuing honour to our B. Lady; ſo neither can we more obligingly honour her, then by reuerently remembring her only Sonne, and her deare Spouſe S. *Ioſeph*, as heere is done.

But to make either of theſe prayers with good hope of grace, a man muſt indeed be her *Seruant*, as is expreſſed in the

the former of them; and though I do but point out the other particuler deuotion, without daring to aduiſe in the election, I muſt needes aduenture to recommend two generall conſiderations, wherof the one will facilitate the other. The firſt of them may be, to accuſtome ones ſelfe after an eaſy, and liberall manner, and without ouer paineful reflection, to conſerue in the eyes of his mind, the continuall preſence of our B. Lady, & to conſider the Nobility, and Solidity, togeather with the extreme Facility wherewith ſhe performed all her actions: and the ſecond to breed, and cheriſh a kind of tender, & ſweet affection to her name, to her prayſe to her feſtiuityes, to her deuoted ſeruants; and to be frequent in giuing God entiere thankes for the infinite graces which he imparted to her, and wherewith ſhe did ſo diuinely cooperate.

This practiſe of this deuotion, need not diſtract any man from others, it need not diſplace his temporal buſines, the vſe of it rather may be to fill vp vacant tyms; and I know no cauſe, why a man may

not hope from hence to find ſuch helpes, as may ſerue to make him runne with pleaſure through the cariere of this diſordered, and diſtaſtfull life. For whoſoeuer be the authour of this conceipt, to me it ſeemeth no ill one: That as the ſtrength of a ſpiritualmans life muſt proceed to him from the bloud and conſideration of the Paſſion of our B. Sauiour: ſo his comfort, and delight in God is the vſuall effect of the ſacred milke, and the contemplation of the life of our B. Lady. Of whoſe goodnes to mankind let vs heare and ponder what S. *Bernard* ſayth, *Sileat miſericordiam tuam Virgo beata &c.* Let him, O bleſſed Virgin, conceale the prayſes of thy mercy *(if any ſuch there be)* who can remember that thou didſt euer fayle him, when he inuoked thyne ayde in his neceſſity; but as for vs thy poore ſeruants, when we conſider the reſt of thy vertues, we reioyce rather in reſpect of thee; but in this of thy mercy we are glad in regard of our ſelues. We prayſe thy Virginity, we admire thy Humility, but yet thy Mercy is to vs of a ſweet taſt.

Bernard. hom. 4. ſuper miſſus eſt

We imbrace thy Mercy more dearely, we remember it more frequently, and we inuoke it more feruently. Thus he. And whosoeuer shall consider the life of Saint *Bernard*, one of the most deuout seruants of our B. Lady that she euer had, and see how full it was on the one side of extrem austerity, & sicknes, & yet on the other how his soule did euen regorge againe with the excesse, and satiety of spirituall comfort, will easily find in the passages of it, that our B. Lady is a Mistresse well worth the seruing, and that she did cast some such ingredient into the bundle of myrrh, that S. *Bernard* would needs lay next his heart, as made him euen languish and halfe dye with loue.

CHAP. XIIII.

HOVV fit then it were, that since the Caluinists will not follow the instinct of this most holy Father, in giuing high honour to our B. Lady, they should at least heare the voyce of the very *Mahometans* themselues, who notwithstan-

ding, that they beleeue not our B. Sauiour to haue been the Sonne of God, but only that he was an holy man, and an extraordinary Prophet, yet after the rate of the Mother of ſuch a Prophet, they frankely yield ſo high honour to our B Lady, and they mention her purity and excellency vpon al occaſions with ſuch tender and entiere reſpect, as no Caluiniſt in the whole world hath beene euer knowne to do. For howſoeuer when a Catholike ſhall ioyne iſſue with a Caluiniſt in the hearing of moderate men of his own Religion, concerning the excellencyes of our Lady, he wil be drawn to ſay (though duly inough) that ſhe was a moſt happy creature, a bleſſed Virgin, and in fine our Sauiours Mother: yet as it is euident that they do not penetrate and ponder the vnſpeakable dignity which the being of his Mother doth inuolue; ſo they are neuer carryed to do her honour with any willingnes and cheerefullnes, but only as it were by conſtraint, and violence. Some of them wil prayſe her faintly, when they ſee that they muſt diſpraiſe themſelues if they

they do it not; but otherwise if a man leaue them to the worke of Nature, and of the principles which indeed they hold concerning her, a man may liue amongst them so many yeares as to make euen *Matthusalem* seeme yong, before he find them once enter voluntarily into any affectuous speach in honour of her, *expro-fesso*.

For the proofe heereof I might appeale to euery mans particuler experience, and to the conscience of my Reader at large. But to shew it yet better, as vpon Record, let it be considered, that since Caluinisme was set on foot, there hath not beene (for ought that euer I could learne) any one discourse or book writen by any one of that profession in honour, and admiration of this B. Virgin, either to publish her prerogatiues, or to reflect vpon her vertues, or to make contemplations vpon her most holy and happy actions; and much lesse to exhort the world to imitate that most excellent Originall of piety, which she did set before vs by her life and conuersation. Nay in

all my dayes I haue not beene able to vnderstand that euer they bestowed somuch as one expresse sermon in honour of her, wherein howsoeuer they might (according to their erroneous beliefe) haue discredited the doctrine of her inuocation, yet withall they might at least haue largly described, & praised her vertues, they might haue magnifyed her prerogatiues, they might haue perswaded men to the imitation of her examples, if in their harts they had prosecuted her with true affection and admiration.

For could this omission peraduenture come from want of matter worthy to be obserued in the B. Virgin? Or be these thinges but fables which haue been brought out of Scripture, and layd heere before your eyes? No. But the true reason is, that there is something in the spirit of etrour, which is not compatible with a true, and tender, and filiall reuerence of affection to the sacred Virgin, which maketh them all carry a kind of tooth towardes her: some grinne, and shew it, others beare it with more appearance

pearance of modesty, but with no lesse malice, and generally all of them haue some kind of antipathy (whereof some of themselues do scarse know the roote) against her. By whome although their soules may be assisted and fauoured as soone, and sometymes before they haue the grace to desire so great a blessing; yet their opinions are hated by her who brought him forth, that hath beene the destruction of all former, and will be so of all future heresyes. And it should seem that the enemy of mankind finding the wound to be so deadly which he hath receaued in great part by her meanes, procureth to reuenge himself in a particuler manner, by arming such as he hath drawn into errour, towardes an auersion from her.

For whereas Catholikes are taught to know that they do not honour her too much in giuing her whatsoeuer a pure creature is capable of, and in beleeuing her to haue been preserued by the speciall prerogatiue of Almighty God, from those shames, and sinnes to which all the

reſt of mankind is ſubiect; and euen the *Mahometans* though they do not ſo much as beleeue in the diuinity of our Sauiour Chriſt, yet do they admire, and magnify her out of the very hiſtoricall relation that they haue of her life: Theſe other aduerſaryes of Gods Truth, and Church (whereof they once were, though now they are departed from thence) ſuch as are only Iewes, and Heretikes be the only two races of men, that can be found vnder the cope of heauen (for the Pagans know little of her) to haue lift vp their hands, and opened their mouths to the reproach and blaſphemy of this ſacred, and immaculate Virgin.

But I would beſeech them euen by the bowells of Chriſt Ieſus our Lord (if they care indeed for thoſe bowells of his, who carry no more reuerence to theſe bowels of hers which brought him forth) that if they will not be as pious towardes her as they ought, they will at leaſt not be ſo dangerouſly imprudent as they are to themſelues. Let them take heed how they continue to arme thẽſelues towards

the

the assault of this Tower of strength: Christ himselfe is the corner stone, and our B. Lady is the Quarry, or rather the Mine of spotles marble, out of which he would be taken, without the help of any other handes thē those of the Holy Ghost. Our Sauiour hath sayd of himselfe, in the similitude of this stone, *He that stumbleth vpon it shall fall, and he vpon whom the stone falleth, shall be driuen to powder*: which howsoeuer it be principally, & litterally true of him, in regard of them who offend him first, and afterward prouoke him to take vengeance of them for their other sinnes; yet experience telleth vs, that it carryeth some proportion towards such others as oppose themselues, and offend the honour of our B. Lady, who haue come, after liues led in extreme obscurity of mind and misery, to end wretchedly in despayre.

Hier. in Ierem. 31. & Zach. 14.

Luc. 20.

I remit my selfe to good obseruers, whether some such as hauing beene Catholikes, and comming after to loose (togeather with their Religion) the very reputation both of Christianity, and com-

mon honesty, haue not beene formerly knowne to carry a secret, and subtile spite to the honour of our Lady: and on the other side, I could for a need name some Caluinists, who being in a faire way to obtaine both temporall, and eternall felicity by finding themselues to be moued internally to grow into some tendernes of deuotion towards our B. Lady, vpon an expresse resistance of those good motions, and a fortifying themselues in the contrary purpose, haue fallen into such pouerty, and misery, and disreputation, and confusion, as that, at the instant wherein now I speake, they are growne to be the very By-wordes, and Prouerbs of the places wherein they liue.

And as for such as are, and by the grace of God are to continue of our cõmunion, whether they be of England, or any other Countrey (as there is a latitude in the natures, and inclinations of men) and some euen amongst vs are much more deuoted to our B. Lady then some others (yet so that none of vs doe not

not take ioy in giuing her gladly all her rights, none of vs that do not extoll her, none of vs that do not desire her prayers, that God Almighty may be mercifull vnto vs through Christ our Lord:) so I can protest, as in the diuine presence, that whosoeuer they be amongst vs, that are, and appeare to be the most tenderly affected towards the honouring, and louing of this sacred Virgin, are also found to be the men who in other respects deserue to be acknowledged as most eminent in all kind of Angelicall vertue. So that deuotion to her, is not only a distinct signe between good and bad, that is, between Catholikes and no Catholikes, but it is in like manner a signe of difference betweene good, and better, that is between ordinary Catholikes and such others, as are the best amongst vs. And though some may haue their mouths and pens ful of her prayses, whilest their harts are voyde of her vertues (and I beseech Iesus from my very soule that my selfe may not be found the foremost of that ranke) yet in the generality, that proportiō which I

first deliuered is moſt certainely true.

Towards the further building vp of her greatnes, in the iudgment of any reaſonable man, I will deſire him yet to let one only other ſtone be added, by remembring that Parable of the *Penny*, which was giuen for the dayes worke in the Ghoſpell, and by conſidering that ſpeach of our Sauiour which he vſed againſt thoſe enuious old labourers: *Is it not lawfull for me to do what I will with my owne?* and, *Is your eye therfore euill becauſe I am good?* For heereby he may vnderſtand, that Almighty God is not any bodyes *Ward*, that he diſpoſeth of his treaſures according to the latitude of his owne heart; and that he would haue the world rather enlarge it ſelfe towards the admiration of his vnſpeakable bounty, powred forth vpon his creatures, then be accuſtomed, through certaine mechanicall, and enuious little thoughts, to paint him out, as if he were ſome miſerable aged Prince, that were in feare of being depoſed, if he ſhould raiſe his fauorits to any extraordinary degree of greatnes.

Matt. 20.

But

But the case standeth far otherwise; for as God is infinite in all thinges, so is he most eminently infinite in the communication, and effusion of himselfe vpon all such soules as do nobly serue him, and especially such as do it with greatest perfection, and are enabled by him to vndertake, and discharge the highest functions. The Patriarkes were made wonderfully fit for their offices, the Apostles for theirs, the Precursour of Christ for his, his supposed Father *S. Ioseph* (who really was his conductour, guide, & gouernour) for his. And so the immaculate, pure, most gracious, and most glorious mother of God, was aboue all made most fit for hers. But we may first descend a great deale lower, & yet not loose the sight of her greatnes. For there is not the meanest of vs all who shall not at the day of iudgment, if he dye in the state of Grace, haue a body which shall then be knit to the Soule, more glorious then the Sunne, as impassible as the Angells, incomparably more subtile then lightnings; and we cannot now so easily translate a

thought

thought from one end of the world to another, as then we ſhallbe able to tranſport our ſelues, as it were in an inſtant. We ſhall be immortall, we ſhallbe Heires of the kingdome of heauen, we ſhallbe Coheirs with Chriſt, and if he be a King, we ſhall all be alſo kings of heauen. Fellowſhip in poſſeſſing of that kingdome doth not weaken, or leſſen the excellency of dominion, as it would do heere on earth: but it doth highly beautify and increaſe it through the vnion of will, which reigneth in thoſe happy ſoules.

Our Sauiour ſpeaking to his Apoſtles and diſciples, and in their perſons to ſuch as would keep his commandments, entreth ſo far by words of tendernes as to deſpoyle them of ſeruitude, and to cloath them with the precious robes of friendſhip; *Vos amici mei eſtis &c.* as if he had
Ioan. 15. ſayd, No longer will I accompt you now my ſeruants, but I will aduance you to
Luc. 13. the ranke of being my friendes. He had formerly auowed to the Apoſtles, that he diſpoſed of his kingdome to their vſe as his Father had diſpoſed thereof to his,

Againe

Againe he assumeth them, that they who had left all, and followed him, should sit vpon twelue seats, and iudge the twelue Tribes of Israell, whereby the whole world is signifyed. And S. *Paul* taketh vpon him to warrant, that Christians shall iudge euen very Angells at the last day. Now this Iudicature is an act, and exercise of a Kings royalty, and the reason why earthly Kings do it not in their own person, is because, either they want knowledge, or industry, or for that they cannot be in so many places in so short a tyme as were conuenient: but none of these thinges can be sayd of Christ, and therefore when he maketh his Apostles iudges, it is not to excuse himselfe, but to impart to them a kind of supreme honour and authority ouer the rest his creatures. *Matt.19.* *1.Cor.6.*

We see then the vnspeakable bounty of Almighty God towards all such as are to prayse and serue him in the Court of heauen for all eternity; we see that some of vs shall iudge the world; That we shal iudge Angells; That we shall be Kings of heauen,

heauen, heires to God, and coheirs with Christ; yea and, That euen in this life such as keep his Commandements are already intituled by the name of *Friends*, or *Fauorits* of Christ Iesus. And is it possible for any Christian to haue so little, and so poore a soule, as to thinke that the Mother of God is not to be honoured in a manner much superiour to all this? Is it possible that since God doth not make Officers as earthly Kings make thē (who take such as they find, whether they be good or bad,& so they continue) but he first maketh men fit for the places to which he calleth them? Is it possible, since the dignity of the Mother of God, doth vnspeakably exceed the dignity of Patriarchs, Prophets, Precursours, Apostles, and whatsoeuer imployment whereof a pure creature is capable, that any man should be so voyd of natural Logick as not to draw an argument from the lesse to the greater: That if the lesse hath much excellency, the greater hath much more? Or rather that he should haue so little wit, or common sense, as not to see,

That

That as in numbers the more do exceed the fewer, so our B. Lady doth outstrip all the other creatures of God in greatnes in grace, in authority, and in Maiesty.

Let not therefore our Aduersaryes, (for so in respect of their opiniõs they wil needs deserue to be called) deceaue themselues. They may thinke it is zeale which they haue in abasing the honour of our B, Lady, whereas indeed it is but ignorance in the most innocent of them, and in others either hypocrisy, or enuy. Many of them who saw how *Caiphas* did in that solemne assembly of Priests, & Doctours of *Hierusalem*, cast vp his eyes to Heauen, and rend his Pontificall garments, & exclaime with horrour against Christ himselfe, affirming that he had blasphemed, did doubtles iudge by the appearance of it, that the High Priest had some reason. And some couetous, or malicious Iew, who had beene present, when *Iudas* censured the matchles enamoured Penitent of our Lord S. *Mary Magdalen* (as wasting that precious oyntment vpon his head, and crying

Conclusion.

Mat. 26.

out that it ſhould rather haue beene imployed vpon the poore) would as willingly, & perhaps with as much reaſon, haue giuen his voyce with *Iudas* againſt Chriſt, as theſe men do eagerly maligne and of whome I haue ſeene ſome grow pale, and euen ſicke through the rage of enuy, when they obſerue how curious, and coſtly we are content to be in our deſire, not only to anoynt as it were, and adorne the head of this ſacred Virgin with our prayſes, but to caſt our ſelues at her pure feet by our Inuocations. Therefore heere the Prouerbe may well come in, *All is not gould that gliſtereth*; and that twinckling Brother, who in the zeale he pretendeth to carry to Gods honour, doth ſecretly repine and ſnarle at that of our Bleſſed Lady, inſteed of making for himſelfe a Crowne in heauen, may then be hammering out eternall chaynes for his ſoule in Hell. This may ſerue to them for a word of aduice, that at leaſt they may vſe modeſty in this matter, if they will not be drawne to vſe pietie.

But

But we Catholikes are farre from needing ſuch aduice as this, who know our dutyes towardes the bleſſed Mother of Almighty God, and who are not, in this reſpect, to be drawn from leſſe wandring, but to be incouraged towardes a faſter going. I doe therefore preſume to caſt my ſelfe, with moſt entiere veneration, at thy pure feet, O thou moſt gracious, and moſt triumphantly glorious Queene of Heauen, the Mother of my Sauiour, & my God, the ſumme and top of all excellency, and perfection vnder him. I beſeech thee by thoſe thy immaculate bowells of mercy, which imbraced, and incloſed the Lord of life, by thoſe ſacred breſts which gaue him ſucke and fed him towardes the accompliſhment of our Redemption, looke downe vpon vs with thoſe eyes, which ſince they be thyne, cannot chooſe but be of extreme compaſſion. Looke not only vpon vs but vpon thoſe others alſo whom before I mentioned, who howſoeuer they be our Brethren according to the fleſh, yet they will needes make themſelues

ſtrangers from the Couenant of thy Sonne, rightly vnderſtood, and particulerly from doing thee the honour that belongs to his moſt worthy, and moſt ſacred Mother,

Tros, Tyriuſq; tibi nullo diſcrimine ——

Intercede for vs who are now begging thy aſſiſtance; intercede for them, who do not ſo, to the end that they may haue the grace to do it. *Tota pulchra es amica mea, & macula non eſt in te*: Thou art all faire, and ſweet, thou waſt as entierely immaculate in thy Conception, as in thy Aſſumption. There was neuer any ſinne in thee, or any ſad aſpect towardes vs. Then let me reſort to that notion of Friendſhip, wherewith I began this diſcourſe, which I yet am making in thy honour.

We Catholiks are thy humble, & obſequious ſeruants, and *Serui* are *humiles amici*; a kind of humble friendes we are in being thy ſeruants: nor wilt thou diſdaine to know vs by the name of Friends, ſince Chriſt himſelfe thy Sonne our Sauiour vouchſafed to call, and accompt

compt them his friends, that follow his directions, as hath beene sayd. Performe to vs therefore, all those parts of Friendship, and protection, which thy State of Glory may affoard, and our State of misery doth need; and obtaine Grace for vs, that we may neuer fayle of Fayth, and loyalty towardes thee. Thou art the Woman who wert not only cloathed by the Sunne, but thou didst also cloath the Sunne of Iustice, whilest thy immaculate flesh, and bloud was imparted to the Sonne of thy womb. By him we beg of thee, that thou wilt intercede for vs to him, that we may liue in his feare, and dye in his fauour: and that as heere we haue the comfort to enioy thee, as our chiefe Mediatrix of Interceſſion towards him; so with thee & at thy feet, we may prayse, and glorify him in al eternity, as our only Mediatour of Redemption.

FINIS.

2

When Princes take the Lad in ward
To Guard A Nations Laws
The yeomen Scorns each threatning Scar
And Join the Common Cause
old Eng &c

3

Let Valor now with mercy blend
While Justice Strikes the Blow
Our Rights Preserve our King defend
And Scourge A haughty foe,
old Eng &c

4

Here one impregnant phalanx stand
T, assert Greate Fates decree
Kings Lords, & Commons Joining hands
Protect one Liberty

A PRAYER FOR THE LOVE OF GOD,

Made in Contemplation of the Passion of Christ our Sauiour.

1.

EVEN by the mist of sighes that ouergrew
Thy sacred face, which was designd to be
The spotles mirrour, where al souls might view
The quintessence of their felicity:

2.

Eu'n by the Sea of those salte teares, wherein
Thyne eyes like Sunnes did set, whose only sight
Was able to haue made eu'n Hell begin
To be competitour, with Heau'n, for light:

3.

Eu'n by the ſtorme of bloudy hayle, which fell
From thy faint limmes, and dide the palid ground
With Rubies of the Rocke, diſſolued ſo well
By fire of Loue, as doth mans ſkill confound:

4.

By that fierce agony, that deep diſtreſſe,
That deſolation, and that bitter woe,
That feare, that care, that hart-ſicke heauines,
Which in the Garden did exhauſt thee ſo:

5.

(To thee no garden, but a bed of thornes,
Whereon thou wert kept waking, to foreſee,
And count (togeather with my ſinnes) thoſe ſcornes,
And payns, which ſoone thou waſt to feele for me.)

6.

Deare Sauiour of my ſoule, by all the Story
Of that nights worke (that night that had no end)
Lend me thyne eare of mercy, for thy glory:
For with what face can I my good pretend?

7.

They are not Thyne, my ſoueraigne Lord, but Thee
Which I affect, with reſtles appetite:
Thy creatures all (though Heauen included be)
Fall ſhort of giuing me complete delight.

Giue

Giue me thy ſelfe, and (if a begger may
Become a chooſer) giue thy ſelfe iuſt ſo,
As in thy Paſſion thou didſt go to pay
That huge Rent-charge, which I, not Thou didſt owe.

9.

Thy Paſſion, which alone doth make me know,
That as in other thinges thou doſt ſurpaſſe
Angells and men: ſo heere thou doſt outgo
Thy ſelfe, as farre as Diamondes do Glaſſe.

10.

For thee, to do all that thou canſt conceaue,
Is nothing, for thou art Omnipotent:
But for a God to ſuffer, and bereaue
Himſelfe of power, ſhewes power of more extent.

11.

For thee to gouerne ſuch a world as this,
Declares thy wiſedome to be infinite:
But to reforme a world, that runnes amiſſe,
By dying on a Croſſe, ſhewes more inſight.

12.

T'was matchles goodnes, that thou wouldſt inſpire
This poore darke body, with a ſoule diuine:
But t'was much greater, that thou didſt deſire
To ſaue it, with ſuch preiudice of thyne.

I graunt that all thy life a Paſſion was,
And as it were one act of ſuffering paynes
In the firſt turne of thy liues houre-glaſſe,
I thinke thou didſt, & know thou mightſt complaine,

14.

Of bitter cold, and ſo great pouerty,
As that in a whole world, which thou haſt framd,
Eu'n for thy birth, there was but one hole free,
Lent thee by beaſts, of mans hard hart aſhamd.

15.

From thence thou wentſt to Circumciſion,
Learning as ſoone as borne, to ſhed thy bloud,
Which firſt in drops, and then in ſhowrs ranne on
So faſt, that at the Croſſe they made a floud.

16.

Then didſt thou in the Virgins boſome range
To Ægypt, where thy beauty was dide blacke,
And forcd (being growne at thy returne) didſt chang
Thy mothers boſome, for thy Fathers backe.

17.

Thy reſt of life was full of care, and payne,
Spent in obedience; thou diſt pray, and faſt,
And preach, and trauaile, and receaue diſdayne
From ſuch, as of thy bounty moſt did taſt.

All this, I say, I graunt; but yet in this
Thou hadst some comforts, thou didst heare & see
Thy sacred Mother, that full Sea of blisse,
And thyne Apostles, rude, yet louing thee.

19.

But in that later part of thy sad age,
Which we most properly thy Passion call:
I see thou art sold ouer, to the rage
Of men most diuellishly tyrannicall.

20.

There were few comforts, there few blubbered eyes,
Few bleeding harts, few hands held vp on high
In wonder of those vast impieties,
Wherewith they chargd thy deare humanity.

21.

How did they rend that venerable hayre
From those rich Temples of thy royall head;
And thus vnseeled the roofe, that they might teare
The walles, so low as to be buryed?

22.

These walls they first vnhung, and off did take
Thy coate, which once those virgin hands did frame:
But now their sordid eyes, a prey did make
Vpon thy nakednes. O sinne, O shame!

Prodigious

23.

Prodigious ſinne in them, and ſhame to thee;
Sauing that inſtantly thoſe ſcourges came,
Which veyld thy fleſh, with an imbrodery
So thicke, as then it did not ſeeme the ſame.

24.

A purple garment did they caſt with ſcorne
About thy backe: t'was ſingle, but did grow
Soone after double; for thy ſkinne was torne
All off with it, and ſerud to line it ſo.

25.

How did they, vnder colour of a Crowne
Pierce thy fayre brow, the caſket of that brayne,
Wherein the wiſedome eu'n of God came downe
To ranſome vs from Hells eternall payne.

26.

Then tooke they vp a Cane, more hate to ſhow,
And often beating it about thy head
With ſkillfull rage, each thorne, by euery blow,
Made a new wound, and they all inward bled.

27.

Thy face ſo bruizd, and ſwolne, did make thyne eyes
As hollow, as their harts that lookt on thee,
Harts hugely hollow, that could ſo comprize
The NON PLVS VLTRA of Iniquity.

Thyne

Thyne Eyes I say, by ſwelling of thy face,
Became the ſinckes of that foule houſe of thyne,
Or like two durty valleyes, which haue place
Between high Mountaines, where no Sunne can ſhine.

29.

So gaſtly didſt thou looke, and let me ſay
So vgly (for thou wouldſt deſerue that name)
Their malice did find meanes, to make away
The higheſt beauty, that eu'n God could frame.

30.

Yea thou a God in ſubſtance, yet in ſhow
Wert ſcarſe a man, but rather a poore worme:
A leaper, nay an vlcer, which did flow
So faſt, as eu'n to drowne thee in that ſtorme.

31.

Thy Noſe, thy ſacred Eares, were ſprings of bloud,
Thy pores of ſweat, but that which paind thee more,
Was thy deare cheeke, where ſtill engraued ſtood
The kiſſe which Iudas gaue not long before.

32.

Thy Beard, which neuer raſour durſt offend,
Their hands and harts, more hard then hardeſt ſteele,
And in ſome kind more ſharp, did ſtriue to rend:
Nor is there torment which thou didſt not feele.

33.

For where the winged Angells vſe to build
Their neaſt of pleaſure, and of ſweet repoſe,
They all with filthy durt, and ſpittle fild,
Incorporated to thy mouth with blowes.

34.

Thus dreſt, thou wert led forth, to act thy part
Of bitter ſorrow; thus they hid thy backe
Vnder that Croſſe, which did ſuch weight impart,
And payne withall, as made thy ſhoulders cracke.

35.

And as a building, which top-heauy is
Vpon a weake foundation, ruines all;
So thou this feeble, with ſuch weight as this,
Wert forc't to ſtumble oft, and oft to fall.

36.

There firſt thy Mother moſt diſconſolate,
Thy Paſſion ſaw, and through her eyes downe came
Thine Image to her ſoule, which did create
Sharp ſwords of ſorrow, that tranſpierſt the ſame.

37.

But what ſhe felt in ſoule, did backe rebound
Vpon thy body, and that ſeru'd alone
Thy ſenſe with greater anguith to confound,
For now one paine, to be two paynes was growne.

Paine which thou likd'ſt ſo well, as not t' indure
That thoſe good women ſhould once pitty thee:
Thou car'dſt for nothing, ſo thou mightſt be ſure
By ſuffering much, to ſhew more loue to me.

39.

At laſt thou leftſt the Citty gates behind,
And crawling vp (for then thou couldſt not goe)
That hill which for thy murdering was deſignd,
Againe they ſtript thee, though eu'n ſhame ſayd no.

40.

Thou didſt not then (becauſe thou wouldſt not) ſue
A iuſt appeale, againſt their Tyranny,
Whilſt they, being Captaines of the damned crew,
Made haſt to hell, in ſpight of God and thee.

41.

Thine Armes & Thighes they rackt, to make thē find
Thoſe holes, which bored through the Croſſe had byn:
Thē brought they nayls, which with their points refind
Wounded thy limmes, but kild their ſoules with ſinne.

42.

And ſo they reard that Croſſe, halfe diſcontent
To haue thus freed thee from more crueltyes;
But what they could they did, that is, torment
Thy patient eares, with hideous blaſphemyes.

With

With ſome I could more eaſily diſpenſe;
But for that wretch, that had no paralell,
And gnathing cryed, Vah, come downe from thence,
I curſe him to the loweſt pitt of Hell.

44.

The Rocks could cleaue, the Temples vey le could rent,
The Sunne could mourne, the very dead could riſe;
Yet this enraged Impe would not relent,
But heape high ſcornes, on thy deep miſeryes.

45.

Compard with this, thoſe other ſinnes were ſmall
Of looſing Barabbas, of placing thee
Betweene two theeues, that ſo thou mightſt haue al
The markes of Honourable Infamy.

46.

Of giuing Vinagre, and Gall to drinke
In thy laſt deadly thirſt, a ſauage part;
That reacht thy mouth, but this foule ſcoffe, I thinke,
Was that which battered, and did breake thy hart.

47.

And thus deare Lord thou waſt content to dye:
This is thy ſtory, which in bloud was pend:
But I miſtooke the Authour, for t'was I,
Not they, that brought thee to ſo ſad an end.

My

My ſinnes, my grieuous ſinnes, did cauſe all this,
My ſeruing thee, not ill in outward ſhow,
Whileſt yet in hart I ſinnd, was Iudas kiſſe
Which treacherouſly betrayed, and ſold thee ſo.

49.

My Loathnes to amend, were ropes to bind
Thy handes behind thy backe, my thoughts vnchaſt
VVere ſpittle, which almoſt did ſtrike thee blind,
By iſſuing from my feſtered ſoule ſo faſt.

50.

My pride did make thy Crowne; my ſhameleſnes
Pluckt off thy cloathes; the pamp ring of my ſenſe
Did vrge thoſe hands, which were ſo merciles,
To ſcourge, and wound thee, with extreme offence.

51.

My hart of ſteele did yield thoſe nayles, that paſt
Thy well deſeruing hands; my Gluttony
Made thee of vinegar, and gall to taſt,
And I blaſphem'd thee by myne Hereſy.

52.

All this did I, and yet thou diedſt for me:
And not content therewith, waſt pleaſ'd to adde
Such circumſtances of thy Charity,
As may confound, and make mans reaſon mad.

53.

For when thou wast vpon thy hard death-bed,
And ſhouldſt haue thought of making a new Hell
For lewd mankind, thou wert by goodnes led
To raine downe treaſures, which no tongue can tell.

54.

Thou praydſt thy Father to forgiue my ſinne,
As if ſuch malice were but want of wit;
I ſee the eager thirſt thy ſoule was in,
That myne might in thy glorious kingdome ſit.

55.

Thou taughtſt me, that I ought to hope for grace,
By that good theefes example, who was brought
From ſtate of ſinne to ſee Gods brighteſt face,
Selling ſo cheape, what thou ſo deare hadſt bought.

56.

And, as if wickednes were good deſartes,
Thou gau'ſt me, in the perſon of Saint Iohn,
Thy ſacred Mother, the true Queene of Hartes,
A royall ſtocke to build all bliſſe vpon.

57.

If then thou couldſt haue ſpok, thou wouldſt haue ſaid:
Come ſoule, moſt ſinnefull, yet moſt deare to me:
Deare, for ſo deare a price as I haue payd;
And deare, for that deare Loue I beare to thee.

Thou

Thou ſeeſt where I am plaſ't, then ponder well
VVhat I haue done, and ſuffered for thy ſake:
I who am God, for thee poore Impe of Hell,
For ſo thou wert, till I did mercy take.

59.

Thus doth the Eternall Father treate his Sonne,
His only Sonne, who could not ſinne at all:
And if the Suretyes to ſuch ſtreightes become,
How wilt thou ſcape who art the Principall.

60.

O Penetrate my ſhame, my paynes, my teares,
My wounded body, my disfigured face,
My ſoule oppreſt with grieuous cares, and feares,
Leaſt thou ſhouldſt liue, and dye in Gods diſgrace.

61.

See how my feet are nayld thus to a tree;
To ſhew that I will neuer ſtir from thence,
Till thou mayſt be procurd to pitty me,
VVho ſeeke to ſaue thee, with my liues expence.

62.

My head hangs downe, to offer thee a kiſſe
Of friendſhip, which ſhall neuer be diſſolud:
Myne armes are ſpred, that ſo thou mayſt not miſſe,
By chaines of endles loue to be inuolud.

63.

And that thou mayſt be ſure of what I ſay,
Nor thinke my wordes can be as vayne as thyne:
A launce ſhall pierce my ſide, and make a way,
VVherby thou mayſt diſcerne this hart of myne.

64.

If Luſtice cannot winne thee to preſerue
From ſinne thy ſoule (that ſparke of fire diuine)
If no reſpect of gratitude can ſerue,
To make thee his, who is ſo truly thyne:

65.

At leaſt let Intereſt (whoſe raigne of late
Extends it ſelfe to all but fooles and Saints,
Neither of which thou art) make thee change ſtate,
And ceaſe thy miſeryes, with my complaints,

66.

For what canſt thou, poore wretch, preſume, or hope
To purchaſe of the world, whoſe ſlaue thou art,
The world, which is but a plaine Pedlers ſhop,
Of wares (ſmall wares if meaſured with mans hart.)

67.

And what are theſe, but Honour, Pleaſure, Riches,
VVhich it ſets forth, and cryes, See what you lacke,
And ſo the eyes of ſimple men betwiches,
VVho do the Nutſhell, for the keruell take.

For

For whome did Honour euer yet content,
Most kind to them to whome it makes resistance;
For as for those, to whome it giues consent,
It fayles them most, when most they craue assistance.

69.

Looke vpon them, who by the steddy launce
Of furious death, are thrust eu'n vnder ground:
VVhome Honour made in that wild Maze to daunce,
VVhere is much motion, but no measure found.

70.

Looke vpon them that liue (if they do liue
VVho all their life do nothing els but dye)
Seruing in Courts, and who themselues do giue
To care, which sleepeth in their waking eye.

71.

For when they hope to rest on bed of ease;
Their tott'ering mind conuerts it to a racke,
VVhich windes, and windes it vp, with such disease,
As makes their poore, ambitious hart-stringes cracke.

72.

And iustly, since it is the forge of plots
How to take Iustice prisoner, and the spring
VVhich issues out of poysoned mouth, and rotts
Those high reports, which glorious vertues bring.

Infamous mouth; foule hoſt of that foule gueſt
A double tongue; a ſword with edges twaine:
A Raſour and a Saw, for with this beſt
They put their foes, with that, their friends in payne.

74.

And neuer ſpeake their thoughts, but their words all
Are like falſe thruſts which ſeem not what they meane
Promiſcuouſly deceauing great and ſmall,
And moſt themſelues, when leaſt therof they dreame.

75.

Next after Honour, Pleaſure comes in play;
Not that which God by his ſweet law permits,
But the vnlawfull, which preſumes to ſay,
I am thy God, not he that in heau'n ſits.

76.

Pleaſure, thou ill deſeruſt true Pleaſures name;
VVho art of woes the Mother, and the Nurſe;
Thy Roots are plotted, and contriud in ſhame.
Thy Flower is ſinne, thy Fruite an endles curſe.

77.

Due curſe, for thou commitſt Adams offence,
Adam whoſe ſinne was ſeene, though he was hidden:
Both guilty are of diſobedience,
He taſting fruite, thou touching fleſh forbidden

VVhich

VVhich the old Enemy of all mankind
Keeps in his ſhambles, ſaying: Stolne fleſh is ſweet;
Yet t'is not ſtolne but bought, and when men find
At how high rate, their ſweet meates proue vnſweet.

79.

For firſt they looſe their ſoules, that ſubſtance rare
VVhich Gods wiſe hand knew only how to frame,
And next their ſeruile bodyes hired are
For baſe delights, more ſhort then is their name.

80.

And thoſe, beſiegd and hedgd about with feares;
Impatience, dotage, ſicknes, endles coſt,
VVith dangers, and ſuſpitious eyes and eares,
VVith luſt at hand, but wit and iudgment loſt.

81.

Laſtly this kind of man is made a ſlaue,
The very ſlaue of ſlaues; for all the reſt
Pay tributs, more or leſſe, of what they haue,
But this of bloud is bound to pay the beſt.

82.

Yet what do endles Riches, do they leaue
A man in greater liberty of mind
Then Honour, or then Pleaſure? they deceaue
Themſelues that trauayle with a guide ſo blind.

83.

All is but change of Tyrants, and this laſt
Perhaps is more imperious then the reſt;
For Honours rayſe, Pleaſures refreſh thy taſt
But care of Wealth holds the whole man oppreſt.

84.

Ambitious perſons haue an open hand,
And carnall men with almes would couer ſinne,
But greedy mindes are like to Pooles that ſtand
Where nothing iſſues out, that once gets in.

85.

And if they ſeeme their doubtfull ſteps to bend
To vertues ſacred Temple, you may feare
It is not loue of God, but hate to ſpend,
Their harts are abſent, though their face be there.

86.

Now if the greateſt plague God ſends be ſinne,
What ſhall be ſayd of wealth, which breeds a vice,
(A doore by which all others enter in)
Knowne by the odious name of Auarice?

87.

Other ſinnes make men vicious, and prophane;
Beſides all that, this makes them vile, and baſe;
Thou art the Anti-racke, that doth reſtrayne
Mans ſpacious mind, to thy penurious place.

For

For whats thy obiect? Gould, whats gould? faire duſt;
Who are thy friends? continuall thought, and care;
Thy Counſailour is generall Miſtruſt,
Thy foes thou thinkeſt all them, that richer are.

89.

Thou art the Miſt that doth benight Mankind,
Before their tyme thou makſt their heads grow gray,
Their minds grow black, thou makſt their reaſō blind,
In all their life they keep no Holiday.

90.

Thou fillſt them with inſatiable thirſt;
And when they haue obtaynd abundant ſtore,
Thou tellſt them they haue leſſe then at the firſt,
And ſtill doſt preach to them, Get more, Get more.

91.

Thou ſtaruſt their bodyes with thy penury, (ſicke
Which thou calſt Thrift, thou makſt their ſoules fall
Of inward dropſy, and of Lethargy:
Others do kill, but thou doſt bury quicke.

92.

Theſe are the Pageants that do ſtalke about
The worlds wide ſtreets, and which men follow ſo:
I call them Men, but yet wiſe men will doubt
That they are beaſtes, although like men they ſhow.

93.

Let muddy headed fiſh be ſo ſurprizd
VVith ſlippery wormes, that cruell hookes do couer;
Let ſimple flyes, that ſeeke their death, diſguiſd
VVith glorious flames, about ſuch candles houer.

94.

But thou, O man, who art of heauenly race,
Haſt power to decipher this dumbe ſhow,
And take it for no better, then a caſe
VVnich maſkes the rotten ſtuffe that lyes below.

95.

Plucke off this maſke, and thou ſhalt ſee the face
Of that foule Idol whome thou didſt adore,
And hate the cauſe of thy ſo great diſgrace,
VVondring at it, but at thy ſelfe much more.

96.

And if thou be deſirous to enioy
True Honour, Pleaſure, Profit, follow me;
Ile be thy guide, and teach thee to imploy
Thy paines on him, whoſe ſeruice makes men free.

97.

Recall thy thoughts, which Rauen-like do feed,
Vpon the Carrion of inferiour thinges,
And ſend them vp to Heauen, where they ſhall read
Thy fortune written in the Booke of Kinges.

Of Kings of Heauen, for God who only is
The King in his owne right, adopteth thee,
To raigne with him in euerlasting bliſſe,
For all his Sonnes, myne owne coheires ſhallbe:

99.

Therefore my bloud vpon this Croſſe is ſould,
To ſaue thy body, and thy ſoule from Hell;
Changing thy houſe of clay, to Church of gould,
VVherin the Holy Ghoſt himſelfe ſhall dwell.

100.

Ordeyning Sacraments, whereby mankind
May purge offences, and acquire new grace;
Miſterious Sacraments, which not thy mind,
Much leſſe thy pen, can paint without diſgrace.

101.

Bidding his Angells ſerue thee, and vnfould
The ſecrets of his loue, and Sathans hate;
Confound thy ſelfe with wonder, to behould
Such honour added to thy baſe eſtate.

102.

Honour, with Pleaſure: for what earthly ioy
Doth equall that which a good conſcience giues?
And doth full fill, whileſt yet it doth not cloy
The Spirit, and the ſoule wherein it liues.

Not like to worldly pleaſure, that transformes
It ſelfe to payne through ſad remorſe of mind;
But in the middſt of fortunes bitter ſtormes,
A quiet paſſage, and ſafe port doth find.

104.

So ſhalt thou ſee that they who take moſt care
To beare this Croſſe of myne with humble hart,
To extaſy of ioy tranſported are,
Their bodyes heere, in heauen their better part.

105.

Although they cannot long enioy that glory,
Till after death, the end of all reſtraintes:
But then, they ſhall contemplate the whole Story
Of all Gods Attributes, with all his Saints:

106.

And vnderſtand one God in Perſons three,
Vniti g that which ſeemes ſo far aſunder;
Whome eu'n the Angells tremble when they ſee;
No trembling of baſe feare, but of high wonder.

107.

Where God is faine to giue a ſpeciall grace,
To keep mans ſoule from melting with delight:
In whoſe compariſon the withered face
Of worldly thinges, though great, doth vaniſh quite.

Looke

Looke vp to Heauens high vaute, consider right
The Starres, so bigge, though they so small appeare;
The Sunne (except this instant) swolne with light,
Yet voyd of heate, although it heate men heere.

109.

Looke on the earth, and wonder at her seate,
See how the Sea moates in her fortresse faire;
Which though it be a Masse so hugely great,
Hath no foundation but vnstable ayre.

110.

Behold her garments wrought with curious cost,
With bushes purld, with streames of siluer last:
With flowres imbrodered, with faire woods embost,
Buttond with hilles, which bind it all so fast.

111.

This on her backe she weares, but in her wombe
Rich mettalls are, and Iewells beyond price;
Which lye inter'd, as in a regall tombe,
Till men do rayse them vp, by strang deuise.

112.

All this God made, and made man Lord of all;
And of himselfe, by giuing him Freewill:
A Memory, and wit Imperiall,
An Vnderstanding both of good and ill.

A soule

A ſoule that might the ſeate of Vertues be;
Of Iuſtice, Temperance, Prudence, Strength of mind,
A hand, which with extreme facility
Acts that, which is by buiſieſt braynes deſignd.

114.

A curious knot of ſenſes, Hearing, Smell,
Sight, Taſt, and Touch, which men ſo much adore:
Theſe are but patternes, which may ſerue to tell
Of richer wares, that God layes vp in ſtore.

115.

For if his Foot-ſtoole (and the world is ſuch)
Be ſo inricht, what is his Princely throne?
And if mans miſeryes do ſhine ſo much,
VVhat ſhall his glory do? God knowes alone.

116.

And man may ſay no more therof but this,
That when he hath deuiſd the moſt he can,
The world to come, as far excelling is,
As God immortall doth exceed frayle man.

117.

But thou, though fraile be not ſo fondly bent
As to deſtroy thy ſoule, to flatter ſenſe,
And ſell a Crowne of glory permanent,
For traſh, which yet thou canſt not carry hence.

For heere all dyes with thee, thy ſinnes excepted,
And (that which followes ſinne) eternall paines;
For hauing ſo prepoſterouſly neglected
A Sunne ſo full, to chooſe a Moone that wanes.

119.

How much more noble were it, ſince thou art
Compoſd of Beaſt and Angell, to procure
Thy fleſh, to do her homage to that part,
Which is ſuperiour, incorrupt and pure.

120.

So ſhalt thou grow like God thy heauenly Father;
And ſuffering heere with me, with me ſhalt raigne,
Thou ſhalt receaue the Holy Ghoſt, or rather
Be fild top full, with ſhowres of his ſweet raine.

121.

That ſpotles Virgin will behould thy ſtate,
As tender Mother doth her deereſt Sonne,
The Angell that attends thee, will relate.
The glorious courſe that thou beginſt to runne.

122.

Thou ſhalt be bidden to a dayly feaſt
By thy good Conſcience, which all plenty bringes;
And thy faire ſoule, from ſinnefull fleſh releaſt,
Shall mount to Heauen vpon bright Angells winges.

This not for need that I inuite thee ſo,
For know my glory will as brightly ſhine
In thy damnation to eternall woe,
As in the ſauing of that ſoule of thyne.

124.

My loue alone did force me to deſcend
Into this Nothing, Loue the loadſtone is
Which makes the iron rod of Iuſtice bend
To mercy, pardoning all thou doſt amiſſe.

125.

And ſo I aske no retribution
But only Loue, and if thou graunt not this,
Tigers may teach thee more compaſſion,
And ſoftnes flint, for thy hart harder is.

126.

Such ſpeach thou wouldſt, nay ſuch thou didſt impart,
Not to mine eares (for then thou wert growne domme
And I was deafe) but to my ſinnefull hart,
Then take this anſwere which from thence doth come.

127.

Deare Lord, I graunt that thou all reaſon haſt,
And I ſhould rage in Hell, who thus neglect
Of thy ſtill preſent loue, the pledges paſt,
To which my ſoule doth owe ſupreme reſpect.

Wretch

Wretch that I am, I want not grace to know
The endles obligation I am in,
The little that I pay, the much I owe
To thy deare Paſſion, that huge price of ſinne.

129.

But all this knowledge of what I ſhould do,
Detects me of vnkindnes ſo much more,
Becauſe myne actions do not ſute therto,
Which are as cold, and careles as before.

130.

My taſt, my touch, my ſmell, myne eares, myne eyes,
I graunt were giuen for ſcouts, who might fetch home
A ladder, by the which my ſoule ſhould riſe
From creatures, to the loue of thee alone.

131.

The facultyes, and powers of my Mind,
Myne Vnderſtanding, Will, and Memory,
I graunt, were lent as lockes and keyes, to bind
My hart to know, and loue, and thinke on thee.

132.

All theſe thy mercyes, and a million more
I haue miſpent, and with the ſelfe ſame armes
Which thou hadſt willed me to keep in ſtore
For my defence, I did my ſoule moſt harmes.

133.

So that they are not my foule ſinnes alone,
Which ſtrike me with a ſad remorſe of mind:
But eu'n thy mercyes, to ſuch height are growne,
As that in them more cauſe of feare I find.

134.

For how can I, to whome thou giu'ſt ſuch grace,
As would haue ſerud to make ſome men great Saints,
Aduenture to appeare before thy face,
In whome thou findſt no cauſe but of complaints.

135.

From hence it is deare Lord, that I decline
That ſeate of Iuſtice, and that royall Throne
Where pureſt Angells, who moſt brightly ſhine,
Do looſe their luſtre, when by thyne t'is ſhowne.

156.

From hence it is, that I am trembling ſtill,
VVhen I conſider that dread Maieſty,
That light inacceſſible, which doth kill
All ſoules, wherein it findes impiety.

137.

From hence it is, that I did beg of thee,
Not only that thou wouldſt thy ſelfe impart,
But that it might in ſuch a faſhion be,
As ſhould engraue thy Paſſion in my hart.

For on the Croſſe, thou art all ſweet, and ſoft,
And poore, and humble, and ſurchargd with payne,
For my vngratefull ſoule, which hath ſo oft
Renewed thy wounds, and made them bleed againe.

139.

O thou faire fountaine with fiue ſprings of loue,
VVhich make ſuch ſtreames as that by running ſtill,
They grow to be a Sea, which flowes aboue
The bancks of all, that hath the name of Ill.

140.

Not only quenching the hoat flames of Hell,
(Though vulgar men conceaue that this is all)
But ſanctifying wicked men ſo well,
As makes them lead a life Angelicall.

141.

Lend me one grayne of that deare Loue of thyne,
Which, by protection, may tranſmute me ſo
From Lead to Gould, as that theſe debts of myne
May both be payd, and I more rich may grow.

142.

Or rather I preſume to beg of thee,
Not that ſo much my Loue may be increaſt,
As that the obiect may quite changed be,
And I loue moſt, what I haue yet lou'd leaſt.

143.

For there was euer planted in my hart
Great power to loue, and happy had I beene,
If only I had well applyed that part,
To ſerue my God, inſteed of ſeruing ſinne.

144.

Nay happy ſhould I be, if from this hower
My loue were all diuorſt from humane thinges,
And ſo eſpouſd to thee, as to want power
Of ſeeking ought, but what thy ſeruice bringes.

145.

How ſoone wouldſt thou forget my follyes paſt:
Thy Grammar which muſt conſter the expenſe
Of all myne howres incongruouſly plaſt,
Hath Futures, but no Preterperfect tenſe.

146.

Heere then receaue all that doth yet remayne,
I take thy word, which once thou gau'ſt to me,
That thou wouldſt draw all ſoules to thee againe,
When, on the Croſſe, thou ſhouldſt exalted be.

147.

Draw me, but draw me home, for els my hart
Which is ſo ſlippery, and ſo heauy growne,
Either by fraud, or els by force will ſtart
From ſuch coniunction, as ſhould make vs one.

Speake

Speake to my ſoule, but with ſo loud a voyce
As I may heare; and in a tune ſo ſweet,
That, deafe to other thinges, I may reioyce
To tread the happy ſteps of thy pure feet.

149.

Turne backe ſometyme, and breath vpon me ſo
That with delight I may aduance my pace;
And not remembring how to creep, and go,
May runne, and reach theſe odours of thy grace.

150.

I aſke not that I may be worldly wiſe
Nor learned, ſtrong, nor rich, nor much eſteemd,
Such traſh as this I hope I ſhall deſpiſe
Who am from all erroneous fayth redeemd.

151.

I aske not to be free from anxious thought
Of ſuddaine death, or dropping downe to Hell:
The matchleſſe price, wherewith my ſoule was bought
Perſwades me that thou loueſt it much too well.

152.

I aske not that thou wouldſt theſe fetters looſe,
Which do my ſoule from heauenly bliſſe detayne:
For t'is more noble, and I rather chooſe
To ſuffer for thee, then with thee to raigne.

But let me only by thy hand be bleſt;
Lend me one caſt of thy propitious eye,
Inflame me with deſires to do the beſt;
For good is naught, when better doth ſtand by.

154.

O that I could conſider, as I know,
The little which thy Law of me requires,
The much that to thy ardent Loue I owe,
And yet I freeze enuirond by ſuch fires.

155.

Thou bidſt me loue thee, and I beg the ſame;
How come I then to miſſe what I intend?
T'is, that I aske it of thee, but for ſhame,
And no ſtrong purpoſe that I haue to mend.

156.

For loue conſiſteth not in words, but workes;
Not in velleities, but conſtant will,
To roote out paſſion (which ſo falſely lurkes)
And make ſtiffe warre againſt all ſhew of ill.

157.

Heerein I fayle, and do not only craue
Strength for the tyme to come, but humbly ſue
For pardon of ſinnes paſt: the more I haue,
The greater prayſe is to thy mercy due.

Let not thy ſword of Iuſtice take my head;
Let not my wretched hart be ſtond to death;
Let not thy wheele of vengeance, which lyes ſpread
Againſt all ſinners, take my dying breath.

159.

But, if I may not liue, and pleaſe thee ſtill,
Rather let fire of Loue conſume me quite;
Or let teares drowne me, if it be thy will;
Or endles ſighing breake my hart outright.

160.

And for my tombe, I neither will aske more,
Nor care for leſſe, then thoſe deare armes of thyne;
VVhich haue ſuch vertue, as to keep in ſtore
All that they touch, free from the wracke of tyme.

161.

Let others ſeeke for life, and liberty,
And in that courſe eternized to be;
The higheſt thoughts of my ambition, flye
But to be dead, and buried thus in thee.

FINIS.

[illegible] infancy of their Love,
[illegible]
Congratulation, inspiration, Commerce, reformation, information
[illegible]